1389

OUR GROWING HUMAN FAMILY

FROM TRIBE TO WORLD FEDERATION

By MINOO MASANI

Illustrated by C. H. G. MOORHOUSE

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OUR GROWING HUMAN FAMILY

From Tribe to World Federation

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PICTURE OF A PLAN

OUR GROWING HUMAN FAMILY

From Tribe to World Federation

3 copies

BY

MINOO MASANI

Illustrated by

C. H. G. MOORHOUSE

SECOND EDITION

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CONTENTS

1 WHY NOT LIVE ALONE? 1

2 WHO ARE THE FITTEST? 8

3 THE GOLDEN RULE OF THE TRIBE .. 15

4 A WIFE, A SON AND A SLAVE .. 25

5 SAMITI AND FOLK-MOOT 37

6 CITY AIR MAKES PEOPLE FREE .. 47

7 RAJYA AND GANA-RAJYA 62

8 NEW GODS FOR OLD 71

9 AN AGE OF EMPIRES 79

10 THE SHRINKING WORLD 87

11 THE FEDERATION OF THE WORLD .. 99

12 NO MAN IS AN ISLAND 105

BOOKS 116

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1
WHY NOT LIVE ALONE ?

I DON'T remember who wrote this verse, but I've remembered the words because they express so exactly what I sometimes feel, and I am sure you all sometimes feel, on seeing and hearing a big crowd of people gathered together at a prize-giving or a wedding:

Oh why do we gather in herds
Like a lot of excitable birds,
And chatter and bawl
About nothing at all
In wholly inaudible words?

Yes, *why*? Let's each ask ourselves this question. Why, after we have run away from such a crowd, are we again drawn to join it after some time has passed? Why, after we say we're sick of people and want to be alone, don't we leave everyone and just run away to a quiet spot and live there all by ourselves? Why, when we feel annoyed with a friend and say we never want to see his face again, do we later turn round and make it up? Why, when we do sometimes manage to isolate ourselves, do we find that we must go back to our fellows? Why, in fact, do we feel like Alexander Selkirk in our poetry book when, on a desert island, he exclaimed:

Oh, solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms,
Than reign in this horrible place.

What is this mysterious instinct which draws us all together, which makes us prefer to rub shoulders from morning till night with a large number of people, not all of whom we like and some of whom try their best to annoy, hurt or cheat us, rather than live a quiet, peaceful life far from the madding crowd?

To get going on the way to answering that question, let us see what would happen if you or I *did* decide that we'd had enough of this 'gathering in herds' and that we should like to take ourselves off to a deserted spot on the earth's surface and live there on our own. Well, being practical people, I suppose we should take with us a fair stock of food to eat as well as books, clothes, lamps, oil, matches and some mechanical gadgets. A few days would pass very happily. And then we should find our stock of food giving out, our tin of kerosene nearing the bottom, our soap all finished. We should be facing the problems of meeting our primary needs of food, shelter, clothes, fire and light.

Now, I don't know how each of *you* would get along, but I confess I shouldn't last very long—and, after all, I *was* a Boy Scout once!

Some of you would by that time have tumbled to the fact that you were very much in the shoes of Robinson Crusoe after he got stuck on a desert island and before he met Man Friday. R. Crusoe had, of course, the wreck of his ship from which he could fetch all kinds of things like tools, weapons and seeds. But suppose the ship had sunk altogether? Our friend Robinson would have had rather a thin time, wouldn't he? And so would you or I today. In fact, long before we got to the stage of starvation or were attacked by a wild animal, we should have crept back to good old Bombay, or wherever else we happened to belong. So you see that one reason why we can't live alone is that we just wouldn't *know* how to meet most of our elementary needs without the co-operation of other human beings.

That would not, however, be the *only* reason why we should come back to society. We should, for one thing, soon feel lonely. Our loneliness would become more and more oppressive. We should want to talk or write to people. We should want to share our thoughts and experiences, if possible with someone we cared for, but in any case with *some* human being. We could talk or sing

to ourselves, of course, but there would soon come the craving to hear somebody else's voice. We should long for somebody else's touch, for just a bit of affection. In other words, we would need the company and the warmth of our fellow men and women.

We make the discovery, then, that if society—or living with people round about us—did not exist today, we should have to create it. And if this is so today, just think how much more desperate the need must have been when Man was still in his infancy, when he had barely learnt how to talk with his tongue and how to wield a stick in his hand. How

helpless a lone man must have felt, in those times, against other bigger and stronger animals and against the elements of Nature like wind, and fire, lightning and thunder, water and floods! That is why Man, from the earliest times till our own day, has lived in some kind of society, why he has

'gathered in herds', like monkeys and elephants, like birds and fishes.

This has come naturally to him because Man is, after all, only one of many species or kinds of animals. However much we may flatter ourselves on being different from other living creatures, we are just one species of the kind of animals known as mammals, and 'every living creature is part of the general web of life'.

Starting with Charles Darwin in the last century, a great deal of knowledge has been gathered on the origins and the evolution of the human race. When I was at school, all I had gathered was that human beings had become such by a process of development from apes or monkeys, which was rather an incomplete explanation, since it didn't say where the apes or monkeys themselves had come from!

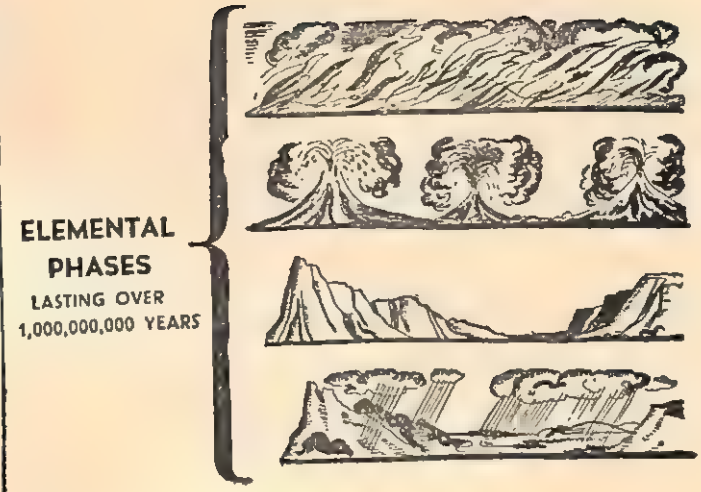
What science now believes to have happened is something like this, but—let me warn you—nobody as yet *really knows*.

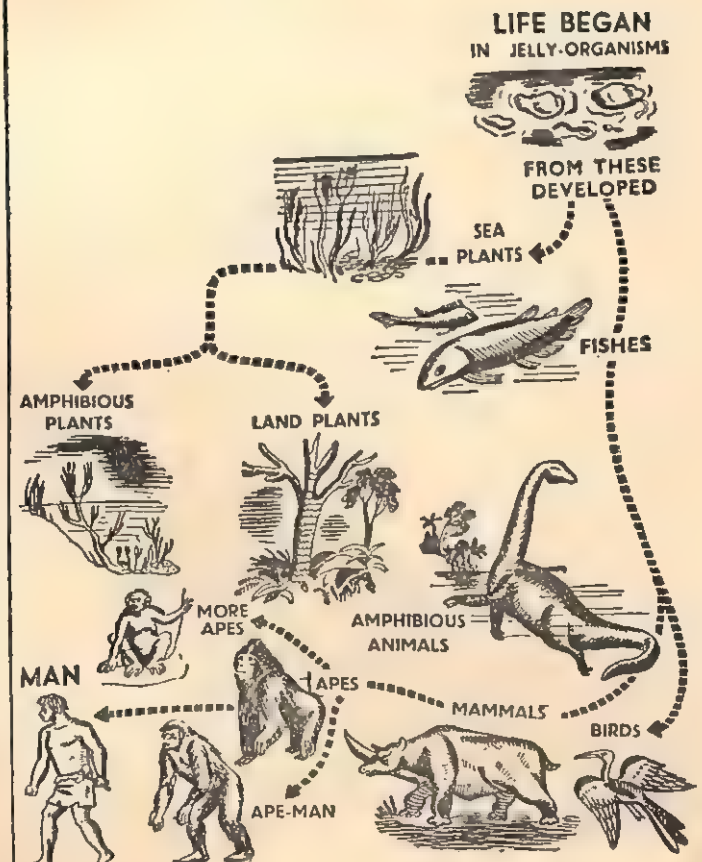
It has been calculated that the earth has been spinning round the sun for some two thousand million years. For more than half this period there was no sign of life of any kind upon the earth. No one yet knows why or how life appeared at last on the scene. But the miracle did happen. Life began.

It is believed that the first living things were little specks or cells, shapeless and jelly-like, which grew in stagnant water, rather like tiny jelly-fish. These were the earliest ancestors of Man. Now these little cells were different from inanimate things, like rocks or earth, in three important ways: they had the power to feed themselves and grow; they had the power to move themselves; and they had the power to reproduce themselves—to give birth to others of their kind. Some of them took root at the bottom of the sea—and became plants. Others floated on the water—and became fishes.

For thousands and thousands of years, the only live creatures on the earth were the plants and fishes in the sea.

THE EARTH HAS EXISTED FOR OVER 2,000,000,000 YEARS OF WHICH MAN'S 50,000 YEARS IS ONLY 1/40,000th PART





Then came the age of amphibious plants and amphibious animals like frogs, which could breathe the dry air on land as well as the moisture in the water. These amphibious creatures evolved in course of time into reptiles—like snakes and huge lizards. Reptiles in turn developed in two different directions—into birds with wings and into mammals with legs.

The important thing about the mammals was that the female mammal, unlike other creatures before her, retained the egg or embryo in her own body till it was ripe for life. The female mammal was also the first to have breasts at which to feed her young after they were born, so that the mother had to remain with her young for some time. Fishes often live in shoals (or societies) and sometimes care for their young, but with the mammals the family came to stay.

The apes—themselves of various kinds—were one kind or species of these mammals. Some of these apes learnt in course of time to stand erect by balancing their bodies on their hind legs, instead of prowling on all fours like the other animals. So they could walk and even run. That, in a way, was the beginning of Man. The difficulty with which we are able even now to stand erect for a long period at a stretch is a reminder to us that standing erect is something we learnt not so very long ago !

This reminds me of the delightful answer a little girl in school gave to her teacher when she was asked why women were softer and gentler than men.

'Well, you see,' she replied, 'both Man and Woman have sprung from the ape, but Woman sprang farther !'

To which we may add—'but neither of them has yet sprung very far'.

This transformation from ape to man was neither a quick nor a direct change. For hundreds of thousands of years there was only the walking ape-man. People talk of there being a missing link in the chain of man's evolution. Actually, there is not just one missing link. There are several links missing in our chain of knowledge on this point.

Anyway, Man emerged as real Man somewhere round about fifty thousand years ago. We see therefore how recently we appeared on the earth and how young we still are as animals go! This also puts us in our place because it shows that the earth was not made for Man. Rather, Man just managed to happen rather late in the earth's history.

We have raced through the story of several million years in this short chapter because it helps to show us why it is that the ways of living of other animals—at which we shall now proceed to take a peep—have such a lot to teach us about our own nature and our own social life.

2
WHO ARE THE FITTEST ?

WE HAVE seen that living creatures change or evolve slowly through the centuries. They do so in response to changes in climate, of which there have been some very drastic ones, changes in their environment and natural surroundings. This process has been described as Natural Selection, or a struggle for survival on the part of various species, and it was suggested by Charles Darwin that those species survive which are the fittest.

This slogan of the Survival of the Fittest—it should really be the Survival of the *Fitter*—has often been misunderstood to mean the survival of those fittest in the way of physical strength or capacity to fight. Now, that is absurd—or the little ant would never have survived in such huge numbers while big, powerful monsters like the dinosaur and the mammoth have been wiped out in the struggle and become extinct.

The facts are very different. The life of the entire animal world demonstrates that what counts is not size or even strength but the instinct or intelligence to combine—to avoid conflict among members of the same species.

'Nature,' says H. G. Wells, 'is a great friend of co-

operation; it is a gross libel upon her to say she is always "red in tooth and claw".'

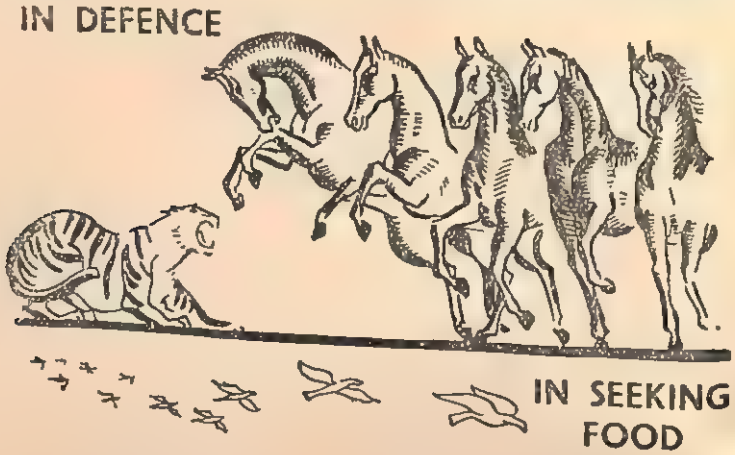
This view is borne out by the deep study of animal life made by many naturalists. Prince Peter Kropotkin was a Russian revolutionary in the days of the Tsars. But he was also a natural scientist. He made many journeys in Siberia and Manchuria and watched at close quarters the wild life of the animals. He tells us in his writings that he could not find anywhere among animals of the same kind or species that bitter struggle for food and existence that some people imagine is there. On the contrary, what he found all the time was mutual aid and mutual support.

The test of fitness to survive is thus neither strength nor fierceness, but mainly, as Darwin also pointed out but did not emphasize enough, the capacity of particular kinds of animals to combine so as to support one another, strong and weak, for the welfare of the species. To put it another way, that kind of animal survives which keeps closest to its fellows and combines with them best in overcoming natural obstacles and the attacks of other kinds of animals.

Between *different* kinds of animals there *is* a certain amount of competition and conflict, whether for food or for the occupation of a particular patch of land. But among members of the *same* species mutual aid or co-operation is the law of Nature. Those who combine live and survive. Those who quarrel and fight are wiped out.

That is one of the reasons why mild but sociable animals like deer, horses and cattle are so much more numerous than fierce but individualistic animals like lions and tigers, and why the sociable duck far outnumbers the aggressive falcon. Wild horses, for instance, live in big tribes. As soon as a beast of prey like a tiger is spotted, they all form a solid ring and beat off the attack. No horse can be captured or killed so long as it is not separated from the herd. In the same way, hundreds of little lapwings have been known to gather together and chase away a much bigger bird of prey like a falcon.

But beating off aggressors, whether among animals or men, is not enough. Everyone must have food to live. Here



SURVIVAL BY MUTUAL AID

too one finds that from the tiny ants at one end of the scale to the wolves at the other end, almost all living creatures hunt or gather food in co-operation. Not only do wolves

hunt in packs, but so do many birds. Vultures send some of their number high up on reconnaissance flights, just as the air forces of both sides do in a war. When any of them spots a carcass, it acts as a signal to the others and soon the whole flock descends on it. Pelicans go fishing together in groups. They form a half-circle facing the shore and then close in on the surrounded fish, very much as we sometimes see fishermen with nets do in a creek.

Co-operative feeding extends to insects also. Ants provide the classic example of a highly developed society, though bees and beetles are also quite highly developed. Ants do almost everything in common—gathering food, building stores and granaries, and rearing infants. They share their food even after they have swallowed and half digested it. If a hungry ant meets one which has eaten and asks for something to eat, the other one brings up a little bit of liquid and deposits it in the mouth of the hungry one. No one dare refuse to share because such selfishness would bring down on it the wrath of the whole community. Among us humans, such selfish individuals sometimes gather a lot of money, are given honours and are considered successful men. No wonder Darwin described the ant's brain as 'one of the most marvellous atoms of matter in the world, perhaps more so than the brain of man', and there is no doubt that the wonderful nests and granaries of the ants, and their buildings, which are bigger in comparison with their size than the Pyramids in Egypt are compared to ourselves, are the result of their highly organized society.

You must not get the idea, however, that animals come together only for self-defence and for food. That is a part but not the whole of the story. The desire to play, the joy of companionship, the feelings of love and compassion also act as bonds. Many kinds of animals gather together for games or races, others for singing or dancing. Wild birds often come together for no other purpose than to take flights together or to sing in concert. Hares are such enthusiastic players of games that one of them has been

known in the course of play to mistake an approaching fox for one of its playmates !

Company is not only necessary to animals for expressing their joy of living, but also calls forth qualities of sympathy and compassion. Feeding crippled creatures or the infants of other kinds of animals is an admirable quality many animals show. Your history books have told you how Remus and Romulus, the legendary founders of Rome, were nursed and reared by a she-wolf along with her own cubs. It is related that the great German poet Goethe got quite excited when he learnt that two little baby birds of the wren species which had got lost were found next day in the nest of robin redbreasts who fed these foundlings along with their own youngsters. Goethe saw in this great hope for the future development of human beings !

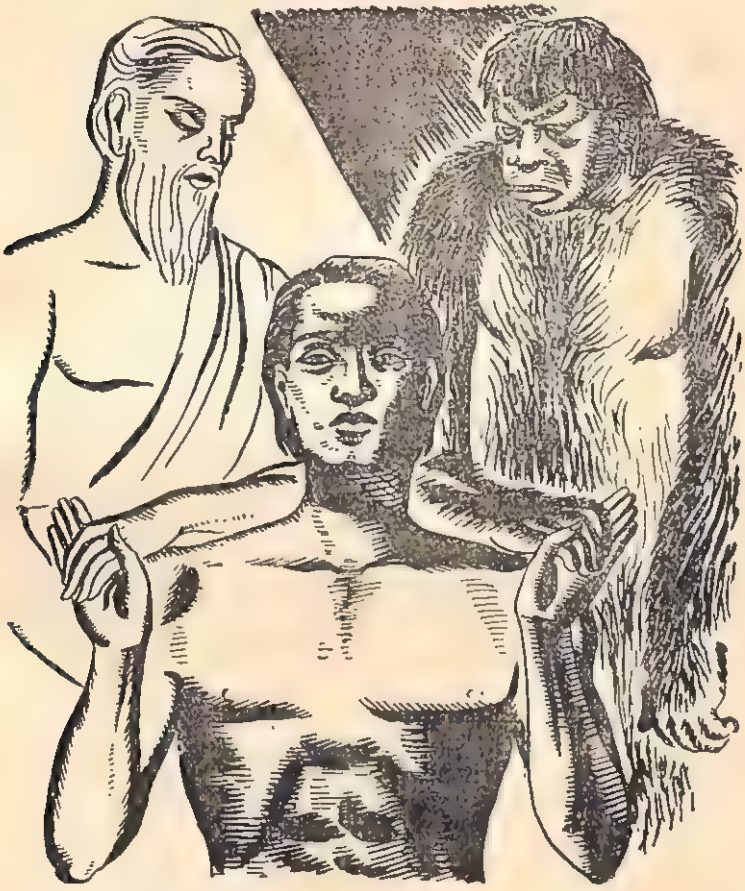
When a parrot is shot by a hunter, other parrots will fly over the corpse crying in lamentation, and fall victims to their friendship and the human hunter's lack of pity. Similar anguish is shown by monkeys and deer whose mates or children have been killed.

A blind pelican has been seen being fed by other pelicans with fishes they have brought over a distance of thirty miles. And, in India, our friend the crow, whom we know only as a daring thief, has been seen feeding two or three blind crows.

Association among animals generally is thus the result of two instincts, that of love and that of fear—fear of other creatures and fear of starvation.

You see now that society, or solidarity, is not the creation

of Man. It was there before Man became Man. But Man, though he was the last to come, was the first animal whose brain developed in such a way that he was able to put this instinct of co-operation to work on the job of conquering the forces of Nature. Which is why he is today top dog among the animals.



If, therefore, anyone tells you that conflict is the law of Nature and that those creatures survive who can fight most fiercely, don't you believe it! The path of survival is the path of co-operation. Conflict is the road to death.

Not that mutual aid comes naturally to Man. Along with the rather weak instinct of love and sympathy and solidarity, each one of us has also brought with him from his animal heritage a streak of aggressiveness, brutality and greediness. There is a constant tug-of-war going on in each of us all the time between these two pulls in our nature, as in Robert Louis Stevenson's story *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and as the picture on the previous page portrays.

It has been a long and painful lesson Man has been trying to learn—that, if he is to survive, he must learn to live and co-operate peacefully with *at least* his human neighbours on the earth. To judge by the long series of horrible, stupid and unnecessary wars in our history books, Man has not learnt very much of this lesson yet. But learn he must—or perish.

Anyway, the story of Man's clumsy but patient and persistent efforts, of the various experiments he has made in the way of living with his neighbours, of how, from the time of Man's infancy till our own day, our human family or society has grown, little by little, both in numbers and in complexity, is an exciting one. It is the main theme of what we call History—his story. Also, it is a very useful story which we must know—if you and I are to learn our few lines in the collective lesson we humans are today so painfully trying to master all the world over.

3
THE GOLDEN RULE OF THE TRIBE

THE MEN and women who lived a few thousand years ago are generally described today as savages or barbarians. Both these words carry with them a suggestion of censure or condemnation. They create in our minds a picture of particularly brutal and cruel people, compared with whom we may feel very superior and civilized and pleased with ourselves.

On the other hand, there are a few people who look back with longing to the earliest periods of human history, which they describe as those 'golden days' when men were pure and unspoilt, when they lived a simple, unsophisticated, open-air life, in peace and equality.

A reading of history does not, however, seem to justify either of these conflicting attitudes. The Golden Age only looks attractive because we are so far away from it. Distance, as your poetry book has told you, 'lends enchantment to the view'. It is true there was equality in those days. When closely examined, however, it was an equality, not of knowledge or of comfort or of wealth, but it was equality in ignorance and poverty. An Italian historian has recommended that those who have romantic yearnings after the good old days should be made to spend one night on what our forefathers used to call a bed ! Of course, he wasn't thinking of India where most people are still living in the Golden Age—since they have to do without any kind of bed at all!

But if this romantic view of the past is untrue, equally unjustified is it to look down with contempt on our distant ancestors. It was the so-called savage who laid the foundations of the civilization of which we are proud. And in any case, with the most savage wars taking place in our own times, none of us can afford to put on airs.

The truth seems to be that man in his infancy was neither an ideal of virtue nor an embodiment of savagery. He was rather like us—a mixture of both. But unlike us, he was young—and therefore more innocent on the one hand and more wild on the other. Perhaps I can best help you to understand the mentality of those primitive men by saying that boys of between seven and fourteen—I hope you are above that age!—are in the savage state, at least as far as their parents and teachers will allow them to be! So we should try to avoid the use of the words 'savages' and 'barbarians' and call our distant forefathers 'primitive' men—thus neither condemning nor complimenting them.

Now, what was the form of society which primitive Man first created? The question is not easy to answer because historians and anthropologists and archaeologists are rather divided on the subject.

One school of these Wise Men holds that men first lived in little families made up of one man, one or two women and their children—not very unlike the families of today. Later on, many of these families joined to form clans and tribes—clans being small groups and tribes bigger ones.

The other school of thought believes that mankind did not begin its life in such isolated families but lived in fairly large groups, like tribes and clans, which later broke up into small families.

Now, as I told you at the very start, when arguing about things that are supposed to have happened ten or twenty thousand years ago, nobody really knows, and even the wisest and the most learned can only make clever guesses. I do not happen to be either very learned or particularly wise, but from what little I have read on the subject my guess is that the tribe and the clan came first, and not the family. So let us first talk of the tribe.

You may ask me 'How or why was it that the tribe was the first social institution created by Man?' The answer, I think, is that apart from Man's fear of loneliness, the tribe was the sort of grouping that made it easiest for Man to

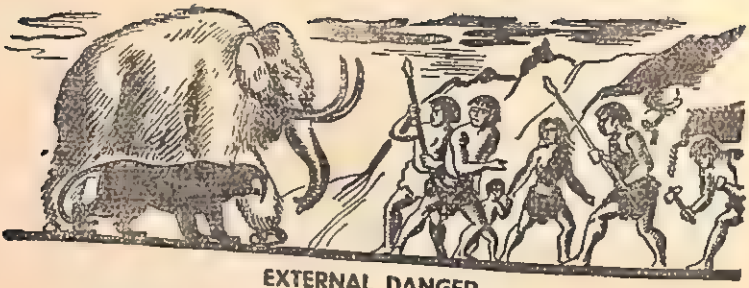
exist and to survive. For one thing, with no rifles or other weapons, isolated human beings were at the mercy of stronger and more powerful animals. Man was, to start with, himself the hunted animal as often as he was the hunter. In both capacities, the more men there were who joined together in a bunch and the more there were who moved and fought and hunted together, the easier it was for them to defend themselves and to secure food for themselves.

Besides, the tribe was the form of society which Man had inherited from his animal past. Apart from a few carnivorous species of the tiger-cat family, and particular kinds of apes like the gorilla and orang-outangs, most mammals, including the chimpanzee, are *social* animals who live in hordes. The human tribe and clan were therefore nothing but the continuation of the animal horde.

Let us for a while look at the composition of the tribe and the relations between its members. How big was the tribe? Who could be its members? What held them together? How did they live? What were their means of livelihood? Did the tribe have a government or rulers?

Since tribes have existed from the earliest times and lingered on here and there till our own generation, as among the Bushmen of Australia, the Negroes of Africa, the Red Indians of America and the Eskimos of the Arctic regions, it is obviously impossible to give answers to these questions which would be true of *all* of them. We may, however, allow ourselves a glimpse of tribal society as it existed in the days when it was still the *only* or the *dominant* form of organization.

Those tribes were mostly made up of people whom we may call hunters. They lived by hunting wild animals or fish with crude weapons like bows and arrows and spears. This source of food supply they supplemented by pulling out wild roots from the earth or plucking fruit from trees. They were thus food *gatherers*. Of *growing* food, of cultivating wheat or rice or vegetables, they had as yet no idea.



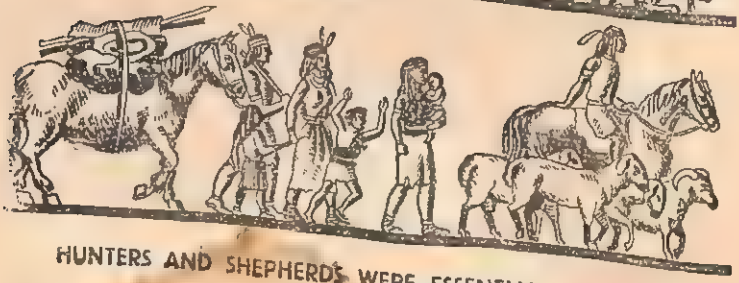
EXTERNAL DANGER
LEADS MEN TO FORM GROUPS, CLANS OR TRIBES

CLAN SUBSISTS BY HUNTING

AND BY FOOD GATHERING

THEN MAN TAMES ANIMALS AND WE GET A SECOND TYPE OF MAN-GROUP...

THE SHEPHERD



HUNTERS AND SHEPHERDS WERE ESSENTIALLY NOMADS

These tribes were therefore to be found near jungles or forests where wild animals were to be found in plenty, or near rivers, lakes and the sea, where fish was the main attraction. It has been suggested that the preference of little boys and girls for playing in water as well as of grown-

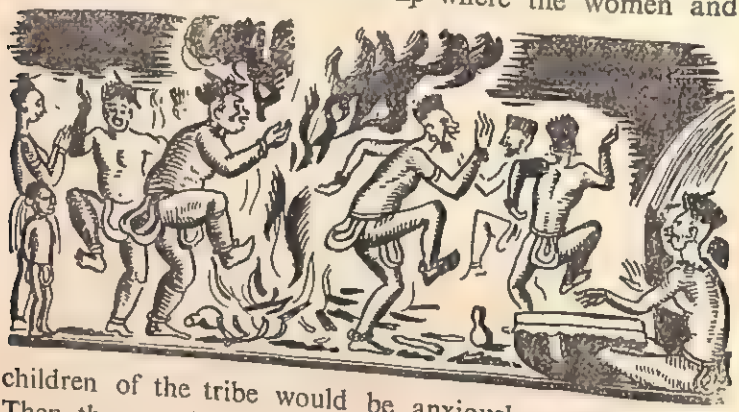
ups for holidaying at seaside resorts are both relics of the love of water, which was one of the first of human passions — a passion man shared with all other animals.

It was thus a hand-to-mouth sort of existence. The primitive folks did not know what it was to save for a rainy day. Life was either a feast or a fast. This is still the case wherever the tribal system has survived. Every Hottentot in Africa is a born gentleman of leisure, while among the American Indians it is simply not done to preserve food for the next day. The Eskimos are equally carefree, as the following story shows.

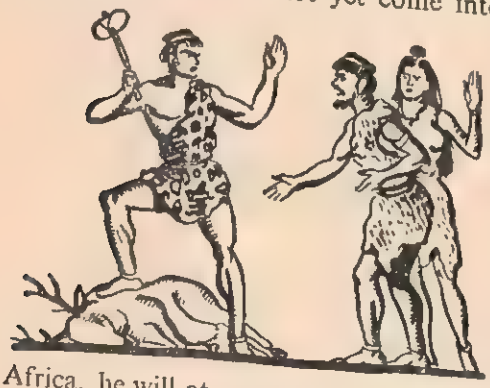
'Of what are you thinking?' a traveller from Europe asked one of his Eskimo guides.

'I do not have to think,' was the reply; 'I have plenty of meat.'

In the primitive tribe, all the men would go out hunting and return by sunset to the camp where the women and



children of the tribe would be anxiously awaiting them. Then they would all eat in common, and the feast would be followed by dancing, of which all primitive peoples were very fond. But notice that the food was shared between them without any quarrelling. That was because private property had not yet come into existence. A man who wanted to eat an animal all by himself because *he* had killed it would have been looked upon as a traitor to the tribe. Even today, if you give something to a Negro of the Hottentot tribe in Africa, he will at once divide it among all who are present. If alone in a wood at meal-time, he has the noble habit of shouting loudly three times an invitation to any hungry



passer-by who may happen to be near to join in his meal before he starts tucking in. And these are the men *we* call savages!

It is true that some of those primitive tribes were cannibals—that is, they ate human flesh. But they would never eat a man of their own tribe. Foreigners or outsiders they were often driven to eat through sheer necessity, when animals ran short. Remember, they had not yet discovered how to cultivate the soil. They would have argued in their defence somewhat like this: If in a fight between two tribes some of the enemy were killed, what harm did it do a dead man if his body was usefully eaten up instead of being buried or left to rot?

Not only was food shared equally, but also everything else they had. If a man built a canoe, others would use it just when they liked. When, later, the Eskimos imitated the example of the Europeans in having private property, they discovered an original way of reducing the great inequalities of wealth which would have destroyed their tribal solidarity. When an Eskimo became very rich, he would call the members of his clan to a great feast, after which he would distribute his wealth among them all. Then he would make a little speech saying that though he was poorer now, he was happy because he had won their friendship.

This absence of the greedy instinct to possess things makes the Eskimos most lovable and inoffensive people. Murder is practically unknown among them and the foulest abuse or insult an Eskimo child can be heard to hurl at another is 'Your mother does not know how to sew' or 'Your father is blind in one eye'.

If they were not cursed with property, the primitive tribesmen had not invented marriage or the family either. All the men and women of a tribe lived together in a sort of 'communal marriage', changing partners as and when they liked. The children were the children of the whole tribe. They looked on all the grown-ups as their fathers and mothers.

You see, therefore, how everything—the economic necessities as well as the absence of property and of the family—led to the individual belonging body and soul and merging to the fullest with the tribe which gave him or her protection, supplied him or her with food and provided him or her with mates.

This was in fact the outstanding characteristic of the tribe as an institution—the identification of the individual with the tribe. Every act, every incident in day-to-day life, was considered a matter of interest to the whole tribe. Individualism—the assertion of the rights and liberties of the individual—was to come much later in history.

'Each for all' was the golden rule of tribal society. But let me warn you that this was so only *within* the tribe. Between different tribes, such brotherhood was unfortunately lacking. Each tribe considered itself the Chosen People, much as nations do today. Outside that charmed circle, murder was no longer considered murder, nor robbery condemned as robbery. And so, sad to say, war appeared on the scene as an institution and a habit of humanity.

It was these wars which, for the first time, created rulers in the world. So long as a tribe went hunting in peace-time, there was no need for a chief or a king or a ruler of any kind. There was perfect equality and democracy. Custom was the only law, and the public opinion of the tribe saw to it that custom was respected. When tribes began to poach on one another's hunting- and fishing-grounds, however, the opportunity was provided by the ensuing battle for a leader to arise. It is thus war that creates dictators, and dictators who in turn cause war.

To start with, the man who led a tribe in a particular battle ceased to lead once it was over. But as time went on, the leader in battle became the chief of the tribe till he died. Still later, a dead chief's son would pretend to be in touch with his father's spirit and to receive messages from him. Out of respect and fear of the dead chief, the tribe would then accept his son as the chief and his commands

as laws. This acceptance of inherited authority was in time to turn chiefs into kings. But that was to come much later.

An earlier change that we notice in primitive tribal society is that Man somehow learnt how to tame the young of wild animals and to domesticate them. Among the earliest animals so domesticated was the dog, Man's oldest friend. Cattle, horses, camels, pigs, goats and sheep were to follow.

And so a new kind of tribe came into existence — tribes of shepherds with herds of cattle and horses and with flocks of sheep. The tribes lived on these tame animals they bred, which provided them with meat and milk for food, which gave them wool for their clothes and their tents and which also served them as beasts of burden.

Now there was one thing common to both these kinds of tribes, to hunters as well as to shepherds. They were wanderers. They did not settle down on a particular spot and make it their homeland. In fact, they had no homes, but only temporary camping or resting places, whether these were caves or huts. People who wander like that from

place to place, unattached to the land, are called nomads. Haven't you seen a group of gypsies moving from one camping-place to another, driving their cattle and their sheep before them, and with their tents and their pots and pans on the backs of their ponies or donkeys? It isn't really difficult to see why these tribes were nomadic. The hunters

found that after a certain period of hunting, the game in a particular jungle or forest became exhausted and so they started moving towards some other place where the wild animals were still to be found in large numbers. The shepherds, with their herds of cattle and their flocks of sheep, found that the wild grass on which their animals grazed sooner or later also became exhausted and so, generally in the spring, they would move with their herds and their flocks in search of 'fresh woods and pastures new'.

These then were the two outstanding characteristics of the tribe—first, its nomadic or wandering nature, and secondly, the complete identification of the individual with the tribe, which has been described as the 'Golden Rule of Each for All'.

How, you will ask me, did this rather pleasant and happy form of society come to be disturbed, and in time supplanted, till today it only exists as a curiosity, a relic of the past which can only be found here and there, in the nooks and corners of the world?

The answer is that what destroyed the tribe as the only and even the dominating form of society was a most revolutionary discovery that primitive man made. That discovery was that man could cultivate the soil; that by sowing seed, watering the earth, and reaping the crop man could solve the basic problem of food. In other words, agriculture began. How this discovery destroyed the tribe and the clan and what new institutions it created to take their place, we shall see in the next chapter.

4
A WIFE, A SON AND A SLAVE

HUMANITY has, from time to time, gone through many drastic changes which are described as revolutions. One of the most important of these took place somewhere between 6000 and 3000 B.C. That was the discovery of agriculture, which means the cultivation of the soil.

We have seen that primitive men did not know that by ploughing and sowing seed and watering the soil they could expect to reap a harvest. When, however, that fact *did* dawn on the human mind, it changed the entire way of life and laid the foundation of what we call civilization.

Just how tribal man landed on this tremendous discovery is not at all clear. Many guesses have been made but they are all shots in the dark. It is very likely, however, that agriculture was a female discovery. While the men of the tribe were away hunting—sometimes they were away for

days on end—the women would live on roots they dug up from the ground and on berries and fruits plucked from trees. It is they, therefore, who may have stumbled on the discovery that seeds could be made to germinate. The peculiar thing is that long after the sowing of seed and the harvesting of crops

had started, the human mind was not quite sure of the connexion between the two processes. All over the globe it was a common superstition that unless human blood was also poured on the soil it would not yield a crop. So we had the horrible practice of human sacrifice at each seed-time, when one of the finest young men or women was slaughtered — and this institution lingered on for a long, long time.

The results of cultivating the soil and living on the crops were many and varied. For one thing, it meant that Man had at last solved the baffling problem of a fairly steady and reliable food supply. In this he had lagged behind the squirrels that gathered nuts, the bees that filled the comb with honey and the ants that laid up stores for a rainy day. Now, watching them, Man was able to imitate them by storing in barns for use in winter the grain harvested in summer. In other words, Man became an economic animal. He had learnt the idea of time, the virtue of prudence, the art of storing.

Another result of agriculture was that Man ceased to be a wandering animal. When you have sown the seed, it is some months before you can reap the harvest. If you plant a tree, it may be five years before you can eat the fruit. So you are tied down to the land. The farmer cannot drive his field before him, can he, as the shepherd drives his cattle and his sheep?

So Man lost the liberty of travelling light. On the other hand, he gained a measure of security he had never known before. Fear of starvation no longer drove him from place to place in search of food. In between feasts he did not have to fast. A step had been taken towards that 'highly advanced institution'— three meals a day!

Also, men no longer lived in caves and cutcha huts. They built houses for themselves and granaries for their grain. Architecture appeared on the scene. Canals had to be excavated to get the river-waters to the fields, and dykes to keep back floods. That meant the birth of the science of irrigation and hydraulics. Don't think, will you, that all these changes took place overnight? They were very gradual and took several generations to accomplish.

Where did this great revolution take place first ? Naturally, where land was, or could be, fertilized by the waters and the silt of great rivers. These were the flood-plains of the Nile in Egypt, the Euphrates and the Tigris in Iraq, the Yangtze Kiang and the Hwang Ho in China, the Indus, and the Ganges in India. That is why civilization first flowered in Asia. It was several centuries before the savage tribes of

Europe learnt from the orientals how to cultivate the land and how to live in houses.

How did this transformation from food-gatherers to food-producers affect the social life and relations of men—how did it affect the clans and the tribes? Put in three words—it destroyed them. They had fitted in with a life of wandering and hunting. The new method of food-production was now to throw up its own social institutions. The first of these was the Family.

We have seen how marriage, as we know it, was not known among the people of the primitive tribes, who mated freely as they chose. The children of the tribe belonged to the whole tribe. They called all men 'father' and all women 'mother'. In so far as there *was* any recognition of parenthood, it was that of the mother who nursed the child, sometimes for as long as three or four years.

Among many peoples, scattered all over the world, this developed within the clan into a sort of family which was held together by the mother. This was known as the matriarchal family. A child took its mother's family name and, if she died, the mother's brother or her sister had to look after it. The father was generally unknown. In any case, he was quite unimportant.

The matriarchal family took such deep root in certain places that, in spite of all changes, it has survived to our own day. In South India, in Cochin and Travancore and Malabar, it lasted into this century.

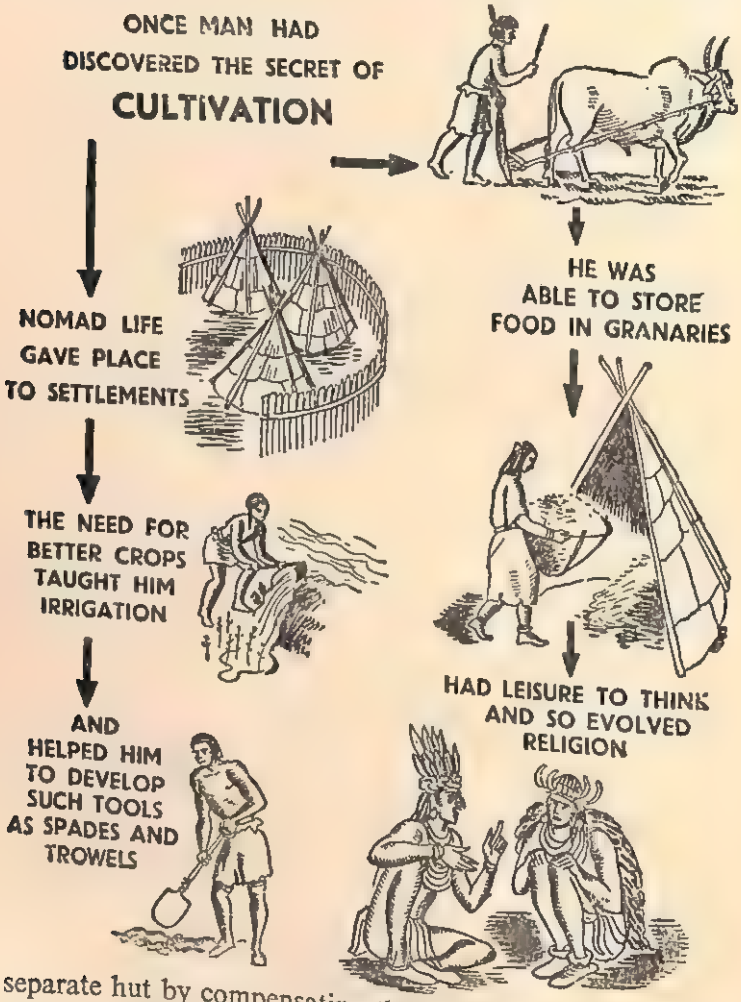
Ancient Egypt had a mildly matriarchal type of society, where property descended through females. The result was that women enjoyed a high status in society, engaged in industry and trade, owned property and, like Cleopatra, became queens. Also, like Cleopatra, they took the lead in making love and proposing marriage. 'No people, ancient or modern,' wrote the great German scholar Max Müller, 'has given woman so high a legal status as did the inhabitants of the Nile valley.'

As soon, however, as settled agriculture became the prevailing way of life, the form of family life appeared where man was dominant and gave his name to the children. This was described as the patriarchal family—something like the Hindu joint family as we know it in India. It meant that a man, his wife or wives, their sons and *their* wives and *their* children, all lived jointly under the same roof and under the authority of the *male* head of the family—the *paterfamilias*. This institution was to last, practically untouched, till our own century.

Why was it that settled agriculture threw up this institution of the patriarchal family? The answer, shortly, is that it was the sort of unit best suited to cultivate the fields. In days when tractors and other machines were unknown, large-scale farming in the modern sense of the term was not possible. Small plots had to be separately cultivated by small groups—much smaller than the clan. The family met that need.

Agriculture also made private property possible. For the first time it was possible for a man to accumulate surplus food. He could now afford the luxury of *buying* things in exchange for that surplus. Among the first things he bought for himself was a woman, who was from then called *his* woman or wife. As you can notice, the same word—like the Hindustani *aurat* and the French *femme*—does duty in many languages for both woman and wife.

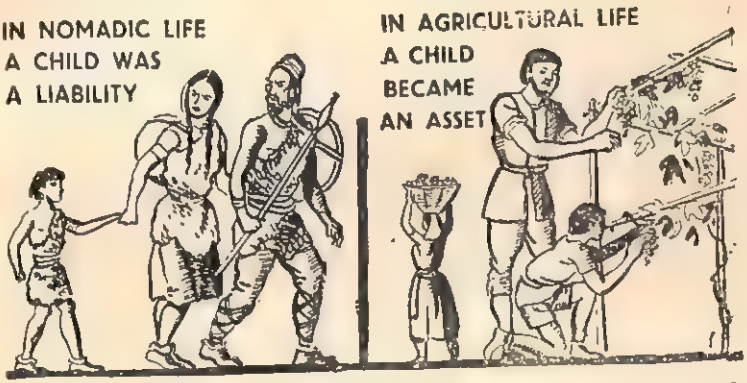
The first step towards buying women had, in fact, already been taken in tribal times. When a woman of a foreign tribe was captured, she belonged to the whole tribe. The captor could, however, buy her for himself and live with her in a



separate hut by compensating the tribe with a cow or some sheep in exchange, that being even today the price of a wife among African tribesmen. This habit, originally a tolerated exception, now became the rule. It became respectable for all

men settled on the land to buy one or more wives and to put them to work on drawing water, hewing wood and cultivating the land.

His wife was not, however, the only person a man owned. He owned his children also. In hunting days a child had been rather a nuisance—a hungry mouth to feed. But now, a child was actually an asset. It could be put to work in the fields and would support the father in his old age. A child also provided someone to whom to leave property. Since a wife produced such assets, she herself was in a sense a profitable investment.



Manu, the ancient Hindu lawgiver, summarized the position when he said: 'Whatever a wife, a son and a slave might earn became the property of their master.'

So we see that marriage started by being nothing more than a new form of property—in women and children. For centuries, in India as in China, in Iraq as in Egypt, a man could kill or sell his wives and his children at his will. When he died, his eldest son took charge, and even his mother became his property. For a woman, therefore, life was a sequence of what the Japanese described as 'the three

obediences'—to father, to husband and to son. No wonder that among the ancient Jews the word for bride meant 'owned'.

In fact, the normal way of obtaining a wife in those times was to buy her from her father, in some places by public auction! It is true that here and there some young men and women fell in love and even eloped. Such marriages were, however, merely tolerated. Thus Manu describes eight kinds of marriages, including that by sale, and mentions the *gandharva* marriage, that is marriage by mutual desire of the parties, as one of the less approved kinds.

Inheritance was generally in the male line, the woman, whether daughter, sister or mother, having only a right to be maintained by the condescending male.

There is a Hindu legend that 'when Twashtri, the Divine Artificer (and the Hindu Vulcan), came to the creation of woman he found that he had exhausted his materials in the making of man, and had no solid elements left. In this dilemma he fashioned her out of the odds and ends of creation.

'He took the rotundity of the moon, and the curves of creepers, and the clinging of tendrils and the trembling of grass, and the slenderness of the reed, and the bloom of flowers, and the lightness of leaves, and the tapering of the elephant's trunk, and the glances of deer, and the clustering of rows of bees, and the joyous gaiety of sunbeams, and the weeping of clouds, and the fickleness of the winds, and the timidity of the hare, and the vanity of the peacock, and the softness of the parrot's bosom, and the hardness of adamant, and the sweetness of honey, and the cruelty of the tiger, and the warm glow of fire, and the coldness of snow, and the chattering of jays, and the cooing of the *kokila*, and the hypocrisy of the crane, and the fidelity of the *chakravaka*; and compounding all these together he made woman, and gave her to man.'

What an anticlimax! God fashioned a goddess and then tamely gave her to be a slave to mere man! But that is how the legend had to take account of the realities we have just been examining.

Many things contributed to woman's enslavement—among them man's greater physical strength and his acquisitive instinct—that is, the desire for possession. But along with these we may mention an impersonal motive which lay, not in the desire of individual men, but in the needs of the community as a whole. That was the need for manpower among warring peoples.

Living in times when in Germany unmarried girls were asked to do their duty to their country by bearing children; when in Russia prizes have been advertised for the first family to produce eleven children, when our newspapers tell us that France was defeated in war because the people of France had refused to bear enough children, it is not difficult for us to understand that the tribes which had settled down on fertile land needed manpower to fight invaders off their soil. Wars, ancient as well as modern, need human beings as cannon-fodder and the laws of a country are often framed with an eye to this need. We find many evidences of this in the laws of ancient Egypt, Iraq, India and China.

Thus great value was set on parenthood, both for men and for women. The *Zend-Avesta* of the ancient Iranians laid down that 'he who has children is far above him who has none'. In India, Manu declared: 'Then only is a man a perfect man when he is three—himself, his wife and his son.'

Motherhood was extolled even more. 'The mother,' said Manu, 'exceedeth a thousand fathers in the right to reverence.' And certainly in all lands a mother of many sons was looked up to with great respect.

An amusing story of submission to the mother comes down to us from ancient China. It is of a naughty boy named Hakuga who was often whipped by his old mother. Such was his respect for her, however, that he never cried under the lash. One day, however, he burst out crying during a thrashing. When asked why, he replied that he wept because his mother was now so old and weak that she was unable to hurt him properly with her blows!

Any diversion from child-bearing and child-rearing on the part of women was sternly frowned on. In that great epic, the *Mahabharata*, we read: 'For a woman to study the *Vedas* is a sign of confusion in the realm'!

The *Mahabharata* illustrates its point with the story of Subhru, the daughter of Kuni, who wanted to give her in marriage. Subhru, however, would not consent. She remained unmarried all her life, practising severe penance. At the time of her death, however, she learnt to her great surprise that she could not go to heaven because her body had not been consecrated by the sacrament of marriage. With great difficulty she thereupon induced the sage Sringavat to marry her, stayed with him for one night, and was then able to go to heaven.

In some cases, marriage was even made compulsory! Among the ancient Jews, marriage was compulsory after the age of twenty. In China, a special officer was appointed to see that every man was married by thirty and every woman by twenty. In India, a Hindu was practically an outcaste if he remained a bachelor.

There were, of course, exceptions to this desire for a big population. In Japan, the little islands soon became rather crowded and so it was the right thing there *not* to marry before thirty and *not* to have more than two children. This was so also among the ancient Greeks who lived in small city-states with a limited food supply. If one man's food is another man's poison, it is also true that the sins of one country are often the virtues of another.

How was it, you will ask, that when the tribes and the clans broke up into these much smaller family groups, there wasn't chaos and bloodshed? How was it that every family's hand was not turned against each other's? If the family had

been the only institution to replace the clan or the tribe, something like that would certainly have happened and further human progress would have been rendered impossible. But there was, along with the family, another social institution also thrown up by the agricultural revolution, and that was the Village Community.

5
SAMITI AND FOLK-MOOT

It is said that Nature abhors a vacuum. This appears to be as true of social institutions as it is of solids, liquids and gases in your science classroom. Whenever an advance in knowledge or a change in economic forces makes a social institution out-of-date and destroys its vitality, the need is felt for new and different institutions. Sooner or later, that need is satisfied, because human progress depends on the ability of man to throw up such new institutions to fill the vacuum created by the disappearance of old ones.

Thus, when men settled down to cultivate the land and the tribes and clans broke up, a vacuum was created. That vacuum was partly filled up by that much smaller unit, the family. But only partly—because while the family provided a convenient unit for working together in the fields, it could not perform the function of the tribe and the clan of holding a big group of people together and of avoiding disputes and bloodshed among them. By itself, the family would, in fact, have made it impossible for rivalry and quarrels to be avoided even between the nearest neighbours. It would also have meant that small, isolated groups would be at the mercy of those tribes of nomads which still remained in existence. There had to be some much bigger group, some much wider loyalty to guard against the dangers created by the breaking up of the tribe and the clan. That group came into existence as the village community.

The village community was thus the protective organism developed by tribesmen turned farmers—both against outside aggression and against internal disputes. It had also a link with the past. It grew naturally out of the clan because, to start with, it was nothing but the clan rooted to the particular piece of land on which it had settled. In time, the bond of common blood was replaced by the bond of common territory.

The village community has existed, at one time or another, in almost every part of the world, under different names and in slightly different shapes and forms.

'We do not know one single human race or one single nation,' says one writer, 'which has not had its period of village communities.'

Of the ancient village communities the best known are those of India and of the Teutonic tribes that settled in Germany and Scandinavia. In Europe the village community disappeared, but in India it is still a living, and not a dead, institution. The interesting thing is that there was a startling similarity between the Indian village community and its primitive European counterpart—the township, which meant, not a town, but a village.

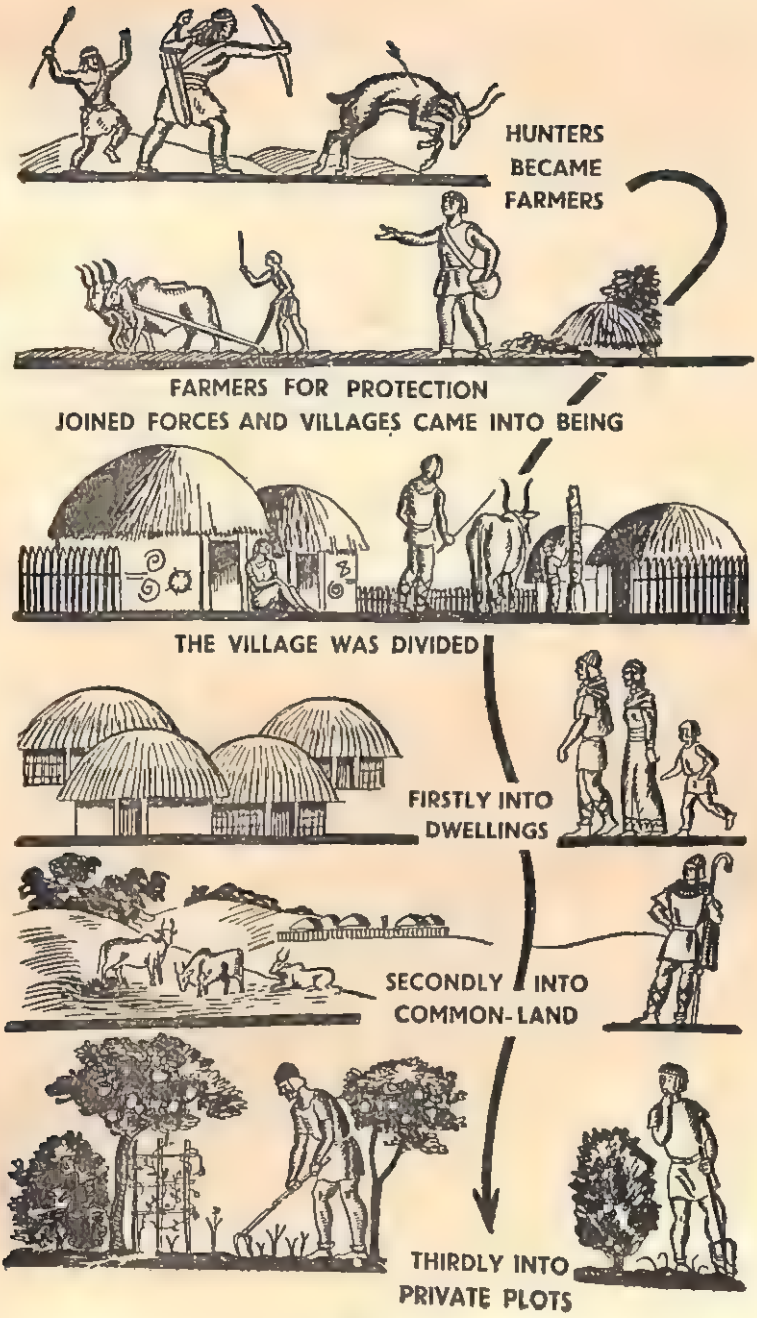
The village community has been described as a group of people considered to be of common descent and owning a certain amount of land in common. It has thus a double character—common descent and common ownership of land. Both these bonds, however, lost their strength with the passing of time.

The common descent came from the fact that a whole clan generally settled down at the same place. As time passed, however, individuals and families coming from outside the village and belonging to other clans would often be admitted to the community. So the common descent ended up by being a myth or a polite fiction.

Common ownership of land was much more of a reality—and it lasted longer. In the end, however, even *that* wore very thin. This is how it happened.

The ancient village was divided, both in India and in Europe, into three parts. One was the centre of the village where there was a cluster of huts with a wall running round them. Each hut was the home of a family.

The second division of the village was that part of the land lying outside the village walls which was used jointly by the whole community for common cultivation and for grazing their cattle.


HUNTERS
BECAME
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FARMERS FOR PROTECTION
JOINED FORCES AND VILLAGES CAME INTO BEING
THE VILLAGE WAS DIVIDED
FIRSTLY INTO
DWELLINGS
SECONDLY INTO
COMMON-LAND
THIRDLY INTO
PRIVATE PLOTS

The third section of the village was made up of plots of land allotted to each family. To start with, this was equally divided between the various families. This equality was preserved by redistribution of the plots, from time to time, as cards are reshuffled and dealt out afresh after every game.

While the land thus belonged to the whole community and could be taken back by it, the produce of the plot allotted to a particular family was, after some time, allowed to be kept by that family. This meant that by having got hold of a particularly well-watered or fertile piece of land, or perhaps owing to extra hard work, one family would accumulate bigger stocks of grain than others and would therefore be more wealthy. That is how the institution of private property came into existence.

The village community was, as you see, a departure from the complete communism of tribal days. A man could now own wives and children and the produce of a particular piece of land. It was a concession to the acquisitive or grabbing instinct in Man that was to lead in time to all the complicated problems regarding the rights and limits of property which are today shaking our social systems.

For a long time, however, the instincts of solidarity—of sharing work and sharing food—were strong enough to make the village community a happy sort of brotherhood. Even though fields were allotted to families, families would help one another with their work in the fields and if by any chance one family's crop was damaged the others would share theirs with it. For many centuries this aspect of the village community was its most remarkable quality, based on brotherhood and equality. That was so long as common ownership in land was preserved. When, however, the land occupied by a family came to be regarded as permanently and completely its own, the village community started going to pieces.

What were the social and political relations between members of the village community? We have seen how the head of each family was its absolute lord and master. His wives

and children were practically his property and he could do with them what he liked. With this domestic dictatorship no outside interference was tolerated. When your history text-book tells you that an Englishman's home is his castle, it is referring to this legacy from primitive times when within the home the head of the family was the dictator and 'his will there was none to dispute'.

The peculiar thing is that the village community managed to combine this domestic tyranny with the fullest democracy and equality in the village as a whole.

To be able to understand this, the first thing to get into our heads is that there was then no State or Government. Nor were there any laws. How then did the community function? How was order preserved?

The answer to these questions is provided by the village assembly, known in Europe as the Folk-moot and in India as the Samiti. Samiti means meeting together. It was really a general meeting of the whole village, by which, of course, was meant the heads of all families. Obviously, the dependent members of a family could have no place in the samiti, which was an assembly of free men.

This assembly met from time to time as occasion demanded. It was, to start with, the only political institution existing in the village and took whatever decisions were called for—whether for the defence of the village or for the distribution of water between its members.

Was this assembly, then, a sort of parliament which made laws for the community? The answer is 'No'. You see, the idea of people making laws for themselves had not yet

dawned. What ruled the community was not laws but customs coming down from time immemorial. These customs owed their force and sanctity to their antiquity. A custom must be observed just because it had always been there! All that the samiti or assembly did was to declare and to apply existing customs.

There were no courts of law, no punishments, no jails. The only penalty was public disapproval. A man who rebelled against customs would be isolated and made to feel an 'outsider' or outcaste. This was a sort of social boycott. A more effective form could be given to it than in tribal days. As one writer has put it: 'Rain falls upon just and unjust alike, but irrigation waters reach the fields through channels controlled by Society.' A disobedient villager would thus find his water-supply cut off, and without water what could he do?

When the assembly or folk-moot met in Europe, the noblemen spoke and the ordinary farmers listened, merely expressing approval by the noise they made by beating their spears against their shields—much as we do by clapping our hands. But the Indian samiti was more democratic. Every member had an equal right to take part in the debate. Great importance was given to skill in debate, and superiority in debate was something to be as proud of as superiority on the battlefield. Thus in the *Atharva-Veda*, one of the sacred books of the ancient Hindus, we find this prayer:

'Overcome thou the debate of him that is hostile to us, O Indra! Encourage us with thy might! Render me superior in debate!'

Now, in many parts of the world and over long periods of time, these village communities, with their democratic and comradely ways of life, remained undisturbed and self-sufficient. They were such complete units in themselves that they were practically cut off from the rest of the world.

All their needs were met locally. The bulk of the people worked on the land. But every village also had a few artisans and craftsmen of various kinds—people who supplied the

farmers with clothes, with shoes, with articles made of wood and metal and clay. Thus, there were spinners of yarn, weavers of cloth, carpenters, blacksmiths, potters, shoemakers and harness-makers. There were also brahmins or priests, there were accountants, and there were dancing-girls. All these were servants of the community as well as its members. They were paid for their services, not, as they are today, by each individual for whom they work but by the community as a whole. Either they were allotted a piece of cultivated land or they were given a share of the grain harvested every season. When they died, their children, who had learnt their craft or trade, took over their job. These hereditary craftsmen thus laid the foundations of the caste system.

Once division of labour had started within a village, between cultivators and craftsmen, it did not stop there for very long. One village might have more sheep, another more fish, a third more sugar-cane. So barter and trade between them slowly developed.

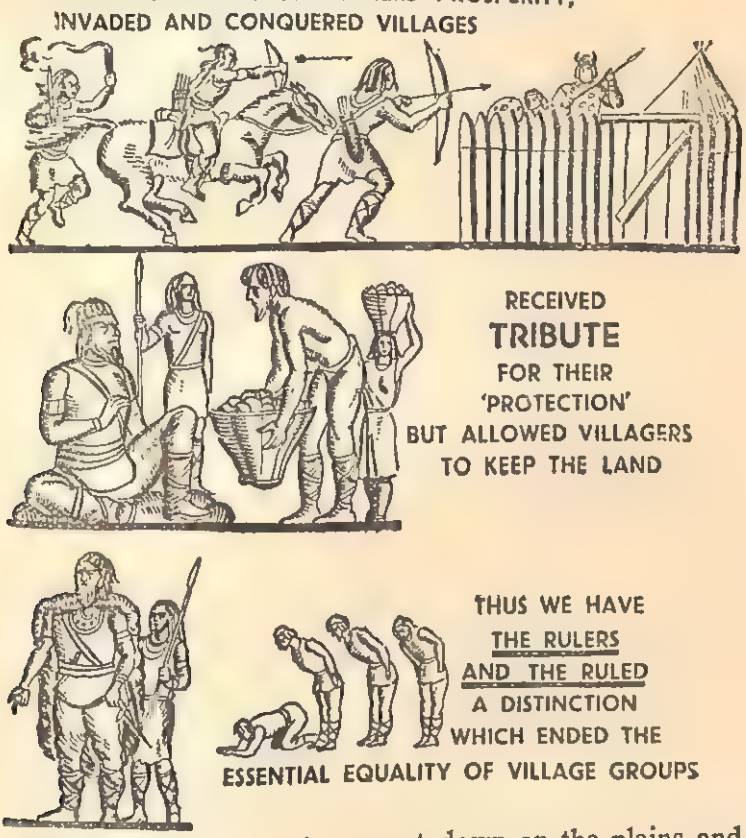
There was so little contact, however, between one village and another that business could only be done on neutral territory outside the village limits. This neutral meeting-place was the market. It was the only place where people of one village could meet those of another in safety. A custom sprang up that nobody could attack or assault or kidnap another within the sacred limits of the market.

But while sacred in one way, the market was rather low-down in another. We have seen how brotherly the members of a village community were towards one another. Their ideas of morality and honesty did not, however, extend beyond the limits of their own community. So dealings in the market were free from the customary restraints, and it was considered legitimate to make the best bargain in the market, even if it was not a very honest one ! A lower standard of morality thus came into existence—commercial morality. 'Cheat—or be cheated' became the law of the market-place.

How did these rather happy and contented village communities disappear in course of time and yield pride of place to bigger social units like the city and the State?

To be able to answer that question, it is necessary for us first to remind ourselves that while the village communities were flourishing, another way of living also existed side by side with them—the way of life of the nomadic tribes of shepherds with their herds of cattle and horses and their flocks of sheep, of whom we have talked earlier.

These two kinds of people often came into conflict. When these wandering tribes came to know that in the fertile plains near the rivers there were men living in plenty on the



produce of fine fields, they swept down on the plains and tried to push the village communities off the land and to occupy it themselves. So there was warfare between the shepherds and the farmers.

When the invaders won, they often allowed the farmers to remain in occupation of the land on condition that they paid a tribute to their conquerors in return for their 'protection' from *other* aggressors! This tribute was generally paid in the form of a certain quantity or share of the crops

every year. The conquerors thus became the rulers and the villagers the ruled. This was the beginning of the State and the end of the village community as an independent and self-contained unit of society.

Even after the village community became submerged, however, it left behind the village, which has remained 'the most enduring of collective forms'. The permanence of the village as a social unit justifies the boast of a little village named Musselburgh very near Edinburgh :

> Musselburgh was a borough when Edinburgh was none.
> And Musselburgh will be a borough when Edinburgh is gone.

6
CITY AIR MAKES PEOPLE FREE

THE CITY is an institution which makes its appearance rather late in the story of human relationships. And when we talk of cities we include in that term towns of all kinds and sizes because a city is, after all, merely a big or important town. A town, on the other hand, is not just a big village. There is a difference in their nature.

Villages are called rural and towns urban. You will ask what the distinction between the two is. How does one distinguish, for instance, between a big village and a small town?

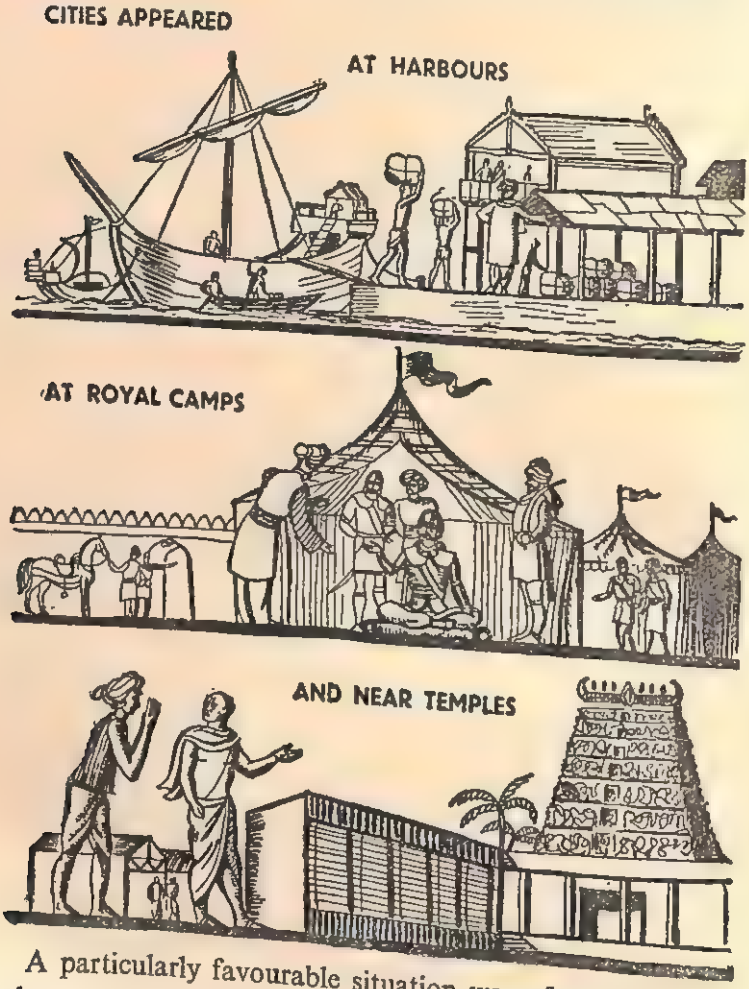
The real difference is that a village is a group or collection of homes of peasants cultivating the fields round about while a town is a collection of houses, the inhabitants of which work in factories or shops or offices within the town itself. The village is an agricultural unit; the town or city is a commercial or industrial or administrative centre. The distinction, therefore, is one of function as well as of size. The city, which is the social unit permitting of human association at its easiest, also fosters the growth of culture. A well-behaved person is described as 'urbane' because good behaviour was once considered the monopoly of residents of towns.

'Men come together in cities,' wrote the Greek thinker Aristotle, 'in order to live together; they remain together in order to live the good life.'

How did cities first come into existence? Roughly speaking, they did so in two ways. First the residential centre of the village went on expanding till it became a town. This is probably the origin of most of the towns with which the map of India is today dotted.

The other way in which the city originated is where it

started straightaway as a town and never went through the state of being a village. This happened for various reasons.



A particularly favourable situation was often the reason why a great city sprang up where there had been nothing at all before. Thus, the point where a river flows out to sea accounts in several cases for the existence of well-known cities, for example Calcutta in our own country. A naturally good harbour is another such factor, as in the case of Bombay.

Some of the Indian cities of today came into existence in the Middle Ages, as royal camps. The Mogul rulers, and those who went before them, used to shift their camps from one place to another every now and again. Wherever the king or emperor pitched his camp became his capital. Courtiers and soldiers, merchants and artisans thronged there. When the capital was moved elsewhere, a new city was established. Such was the origin of cities like Bidar in Hyderabad.

By far the biggest contribution, however, towards the rise of cities throughout the world was made by the temples and places of worship of different religions or faiths. Settled agriculture, and the leisure that accompanied it, made contemplation and sustained thought possible for the first time in human history. The idea of a god or of several gods took shape in the human mind as the only explanation of all the mysteries of the universe. The magicians and medicine-men of tribal days were now replaced by priests worshipping different gods.

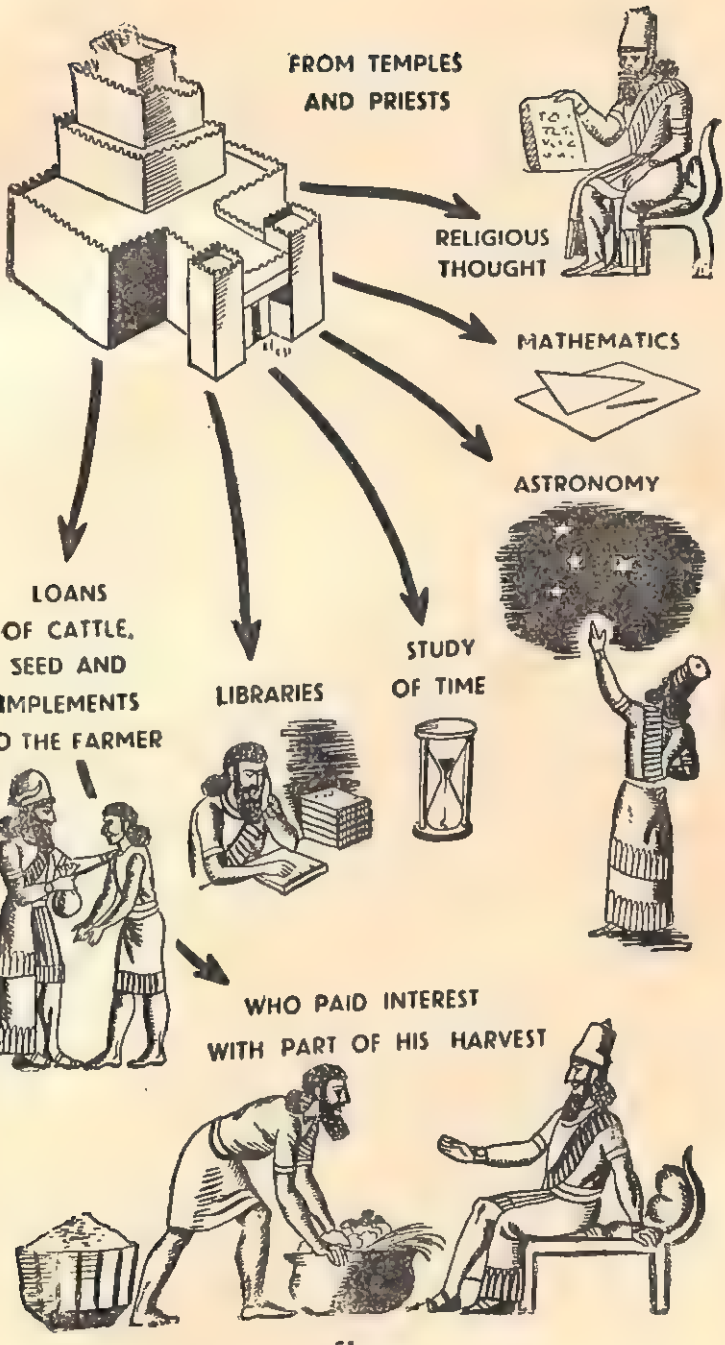
There were many reasons why the buildings these priests erected for the worship of their gods should become the centres of habitation and of social and cultural life. For one thing, the priests knew more, to start with, than ordinary men. They studied the movements of the sun, the moon and the stars. By means of festivals they kept count of the days and months and years. Astronomy and mathematics thus progressed quickest within the temple. So, too, when writing began, records were kept in the temple. The art of healing with drugs was also practised by the priests. Thus the temple was the brain of the community that grew around it.

Apart from this intellectual magnetism, the temple also had an economic attraction. The temple was erected to the greater glory of the god who was to be worshipped there. The bigger and more monumental the temple, the more holy the god. To build such large and impressive structures, a large labour force was necessary. While these men were

toiling, month after month, piling stone upon stone, they had to be fed. That was made possible by the collection of surplus food from the cultivators in the name of the god. When the temple was at last completed, this large number of people continued to live in its vicinity and to worship at its shrine. In course of time, the local god became also 'the chief capitalist of the land'; just as today towns spring up around factories, so then they grew round temples.

What do we mean when we say that the god was the then biggest capitalist? Such records of early temples as have been preserved give the answer to that question. They show that the priests, on behalf of the god, made loans of seeds and of plough-animals to the cultivators, let out fields and collected rent from the tenants, paid wages to spinners and artisans and labourers and even advanced gold to travelling merchants. When these loans were returned, the borrowers were expected to add a little thank-offering, which in time became fixed at certain percentages of the loan itself. Today we would call that little thank-offering interest. So you see how the god in the temple was a sort of combination of landlord, bank and co-operative society.

In what parts of the world did this blossoming of towns and cities first take place? Where did this urban revolution commence? The answer is the same as we gave when talking of the agricultural revolution which turned men from food-gatherers to food-producers. The earliest cities, like the first village communities, came into existence in Egypt, Iraq, India and China. This was only to be expected. The first condition to be satisfied before big towns were possible was the existence of a surplus of food on which the town-dwellers could live. Arts and crafts and trade could flourish only when the farmers had extra food to give in exchange for articles manufactured in towns. Other conditions were that metals, like bronze and iron, for use in the making of articles, and animals for the transport of goods, should be available. These conditions came into


FROM TEMPLES
AND PRIESTS
RELIGIOUS
THOUGHT
MATHEMATICS
ASTRONOMY
LOANS
OF CATTLE,
SEED AND
IMPLEMENTS
TO THE FARMER
LIBRARIES
STUDY
OF TIME
WHO PAID INTEREST
WITH PART OF HIS HARVEST

existence earliest in various parts of Asia, with the result that by 4000 B.C. towns began to spring up.

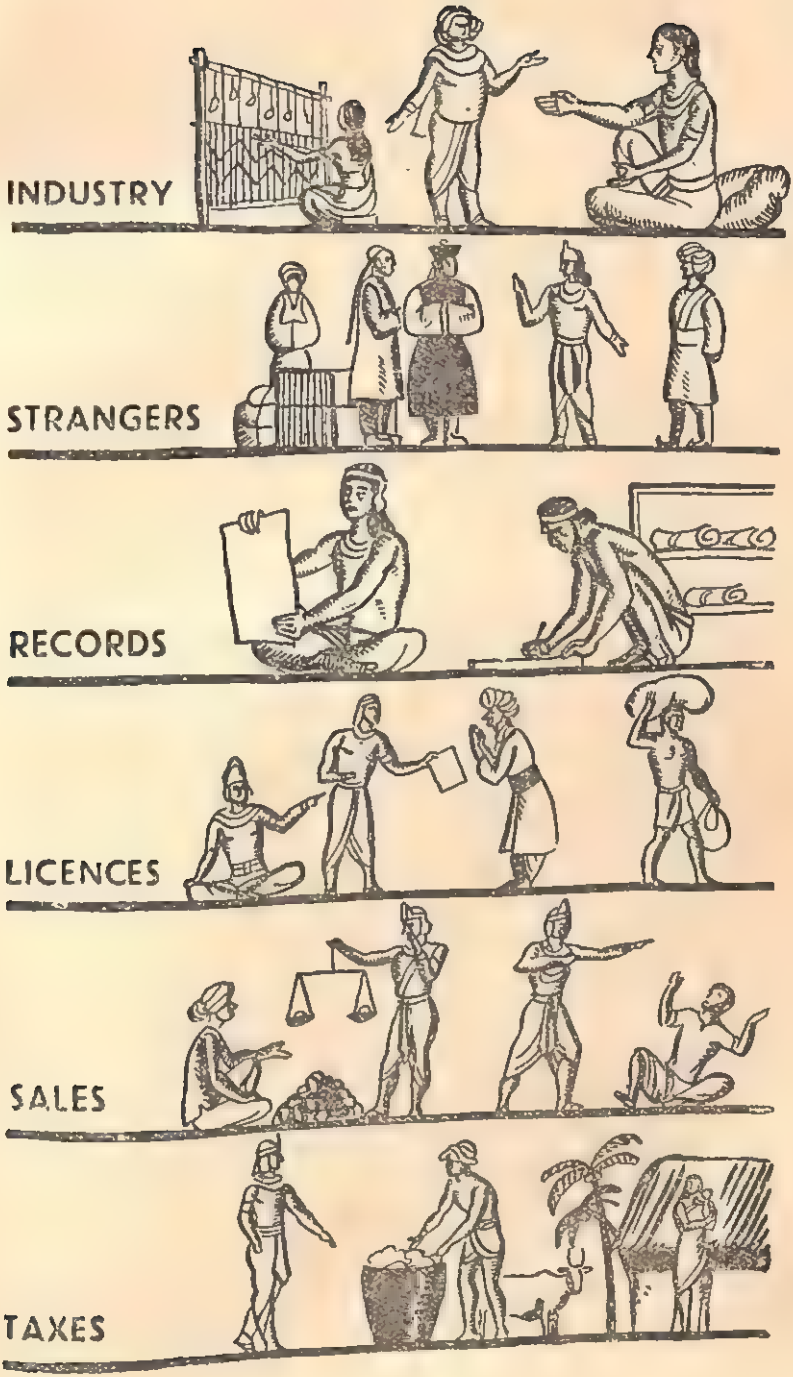
The excavations at Mohenjo-daro in Sind give us an idea of the sort of city that existed round about 3000 or 2500 B.C. Mohenjo-daro was a crowded collection of houses, built mostly of brick. Each house had at least two storeys; some had more. These buildings were neatly arranged along broad streets and narrow lanes, which were evidently laid out according to carefully prepared plans, not just anyhow, higgledy-piggledy, as in Bombay or Calcutta or Madras today. A system of sewers and gutters served the city by way of drainage.

They say that in Mohenjo-daro you can distinguish shops and factories from homes, and the mansions of the rich from the hovels of the poor. The houses and articles found in them show that craftsmen of various kinds must have been at work in old Mohenjo-daro — brick-makers, bricklayers, carpenters, stone-cutters, goldsmiths, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, spinners, weavers and jewellers. The carefully planned streets show that there must have been a municipality to make and enforce decisions. Public servants and sweepers there must have been also, and clerks to write and keep accounts.

A little later, we find that the city of Pataliputra (which we know as Patna in Bihar) had a highly organized municipal administration. It was ruled by a commission of thirty men, divided into six groups. One group regulated industry, another supervised strangers, the third kept the record of births and deaths, the fourth issued licences to traders, the fifth regulated sales and tested weights and measures, and the sixth collected a tax of ten per cent on all sales.

'Pataliputra in the fourth century before Christ', writes Havell, 'seems to have been a thoroughly well-organized city and administered according to the best principles of social science.'

The economic unit, then, was a city, like Mohenjo-daro or Pataliputra, along with the fields lying round about


INDUSTRY
STRANGERS
RECORDS
LICENCES
SALES
TAXES

it—the townspeople bartering the articles they manufactured for the surplus food of the farmers. In times of famine, food rationing schemes were introduced as early as 300 B.C.

The city and its suburbs were not only an economic unit but also a political one. The city was, in other words, a city-state. It was an independent unit—with no interference from outside.

'Most of the cities', says one historian, 'adopted the democratic form of government.' They were republics. Some, however, had kings. These kings must have been the 'very powerful town-rulers' referred to in the *Mahabharata*. When Alexander the Great invaded India in the fourth century B.C. he found these city-republics flourishing at various places on the banks of the river Indus.

Now, as one writer has put it, 'every village converted into a city became at once a new source of infection'. So, in course of time, towns began to spring up in other parts of the world also. Just as large-scale industry has in the past century travelled from Europe to the rest of the world, so in those days urban civilization travelled from Asia to Greece and through Greece to western Europe. By 1500 B.C. towns had sprung up in Spain, in Germany and in Britain. By 1000 B.C. they had penetrated to Scandinavia and Siberia.

As we shall see later, the city was in course of time to merge in, and form part of, a larger unit known as the State. At two stages in later history, however, the city-state was once again to assert itself for a while and contribute to human progress. These were the periods of the Greek city-states from the sixth to the seventh centuries before Christ and of the Free Cities of Europe in the Middle Ages.

The Greeks took over the idea of city organization ready-made from Asia. For a country cut up by mountains and the sea into a large number of valleys and islands which make communication difficult, the city was the ideal unit. It was difficult for the Greeks of that time to think in terms of any larger unit. Thus, the great political thinker Plato

thought the number of citizens in a perfect republic should not exceed 5,000, which is the population of a village today but which was perhaps the largest number of people who could in those days (when loudspeakers were not known) hear an orator's voice.

The Greek city-states followed the Indian example of being generally democratic. Athens was famous for the political debates of its popular assemblies. Those who stayed away from them were held in contempt and were described by an expression of which the English translation is the word 'idiot'.

While, however, the Greek cities were the homes of one of the highest peaks of culture humanity has ever achieved, they had one dark spot. They were based on slavery. The slaves, who did all the hard and unpleasant work of the community, were debarred from the rights and privileges of free citizenship. So, when we talk of Greek 'democracy' we must remember that it was confined to a privileged class of 'free men', just as today, in South Africa, only a small number of 'white' men have the right to vote, and the people of the soil, the Negroes, have no political rights and are kept at a very low level of existence.

The second period when the city-state raised its head came much later in what are known as the Middle Ages in Europe—that is, from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries A.D.

These free cities were then so many oases in the feudal desert. When the rest of Europe was groaning in darkness and ignorance and poverty under the brutal heel of feudal princes and nobles, cities like Venice and Florence were changing the face of Europe by perfecting arts and crafts, by enforcing an eight-hour day for workers and giving dignity to manual labour, by encouraging painting and music, by developing architecture and building beautiful cathedrals, by spreading learning and laying the foundations of modern science.

What is important to note here is that this flourishing of the arts and of learning and this prosperity were the result

of a conception of brotherhood fostered by the city. As on board a ship, the wall that surrounded the city created a sentiment of solidarity among the citizens. 'In a siege or famine the morality of the shipwreck, share-and-share-alike, developed easily.'

This brotherhood and unity were symbolized by a new organism—the Guild. It was in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries that, in response to the growing variety of arts and crafts and the growing trade with distant lands, the guild system took shape. The guilds were known by different names in different languages—sometimes they were called brotherhoods, sometimes friendships. But their essential nature was the same. Wherever a group of men came together for common work, they formed a guild. This applied to fishermen, sailors and beggars, as much as to merchants, teachers, builders and artisans of all kinds.

The rules of these guilds, while they varied from place to place, were all based on the idea of mutual aid and mutual support. If, for instance, one member of a guild were to be ill or if his house or ship were to catch fire, the others promised to come to his aid. If he were to die, the guild would look after his wife and children. If two members of a guild were to have a quarrel, it was agreed that they would not attack each other nor go to the law courts, but

that they would submit the dispute to the arbitration of the guild. So you see how the guild was in some ways like a Hindu caste and in other ways like a trade union of workers.

The medieval city was, in a way, a federation of all the guilds or brotherhoods within it. The chief aim all the guilds had in common was to secure liberty, self-government, peace and prosperity for the city. This object they succeeded in achieving for some time. There was a popular saying at that time that 'city air makes people free'. In a sense this was literally so, because the stay of a year and a day in a corporate town freed a man from the bonds of serfdom.

Unfortunately, the free cities of Europe ultimately lost their freedom to neighbouring kings and princes, just as those of ancient India had done before them. This happened mainly because of the class divisions that arose within them and destroyed the unity and brotherhood on which they were based. The richer merchants used their great wealth to monopolize power. They exploited the artisans in the city on the one hand and the peasants in the suburbs on the other. When therefore the cities were attacked by the kings and nobles, the poor people were no longer prepared to fight for the city as they had done before. The result was that the cities of Europe became, one after another, parts of various kingdoms.

The last of the free cities to linger on till our own days was the Free City of Danzig on the coast of Poland. The dispute over Danzig between Germany and Poland was among the causes of World War II in 1939. There is thus no city in the world now which is a free and independent political unit.

That does not mean that the age of cities has passed. On the contrary, since they lost their autonomy cities have both grown in size and multiplied in number. Thus in 1800 there was not to be found a single city with a population of over a million. By 1900, eleven such cities had sprung up. Now, there are nearly forty such cities in the

IN THE FREE CITY MERCHANTS USED ARTISANS AND PEASANTS TO FURTHER THEIR INTERESTS

WITH INCREASING WEALTH CLASSES WERE FORMED

THE ARTISAN

THE MERCHANT PRINCE

THE FARMER

WHEN THE CITIES WERE ATTACKED BY AGGRESSIVE NEIGHBOURS

THE CRAFTSMEN AND FARMERS REFUSED TO HELP AND THE FREE CITY ENDED

world, including Calcutta and Bombay. In our own country the number of cities with a population of 100,000 or more has greatly increased in the last decade or two.

Some of these giant cities are capitals of States. Such are, in order of population, London, New York, Tokyo, Berlin, Moscow, Paris and Rome. This type of city is called a metropolis, that is, a 'mother city'.

Most of the new cities are, however, factory towns. They have grown round mills and workshops and many of their inhabitants live in slums. Your dictionary will tell you that a slum is a 'dirty crowded poor district in a town'. Charles Dickens had a name for this kind of city. In his novel *Hard Times* he called it Coketown, because of the amount of coal and coke that goes into its factories and the soot that comes out of chimneys and settles all over the city. In India, Jamshedpur, Kanpur, and Sholapur are examples of Coketown.

Modern cities have grown so big and unmanageable and suffer so much from overcrowding, slums, traffic congestion, disease and crime that in our own times a movement has started for replacing these lop-sided giants by smaller and more balanced cities where people can lead healthier and happier lives in closer touch with Nature. Such cities, called Garden Cities, are making their appearance in one progressive country after another.

The three special virtues of a garden city are: first, its population is restricted in number, generally to not more than 50,000; secondly, the land belongs to the whole community and everyone is its tenant; thirdly, it has a balanced economy, some of its inhabitants being engaged in industry and others in agriculture in the rural belt of land surrounding the city. Howard, the Englishman who started this movement, said that Town and Country 'must be married and out of this union will spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilization'.

The harnessing of electric power makes it possible for this happy development to take place. Electricity not only

allows agriculture to be mechanized; it also allows industry to be decentralized and distributed all over the countryside. The progress of science will soon make the giant factory and giant city out-of-date.

Nowadays the city is generally allowed to exercise certain limited powers of local self-government over such things as housing, roads, lighting, water-supply, public health, hospitals and schools. These powers are exercised through a municipal corporation or council whose members are elected by the citizens. The municipality is only a subordinate limb of the government of a country and draws its authority from that government. What is this government or State which has thus put the poor little city in its place?

7
RAJYA AND GANA-RAJYA

IN OUR pursuit of ever bigger and ever more complex social institutions, we shall take another step forward and come upon one which is now the dominating factor in our life—the State.

Today you and I walk along streets lit by gas or electricity supplied by public corporations and cleaned with water from the public supply. We travel on railways belonging to the State. We receive letters and telegrams and telephone calls through State services. We play games in public parks and *maidans*. Some of us learn in Government schools and colleges. Many of us live in houses built by public organizations and buy our food from public markets. We can get free medical treatment in public hospitals and when we die we can be cremated or buried in a public cremation-ground or cemetery.

The State, in other words, supplies many of our wants and dominates every day of our lives from morning till midnight—and sometimes from midnight to morning it enforces a complete black-out ! The State not only claims to decide how we should live our lives, it even claims that at its call we should be prepared to die for it. And, apart from a handful of very strong-minded people, the masses throughout the world accept the right of the State to dictate to them.

How and when did this giant come to life ? Why has it, for hundreds of years, kept its terrific vitality and strength ?

Those of you who go to college and take up a course in political science will learn that there are all kinds of theories as to the origin of the State. For instance, there is what is known as the theory of the Divine Right of Kings, which says that people accepted the authority of the State because the ruler or king was supposed to derive his authority from God.

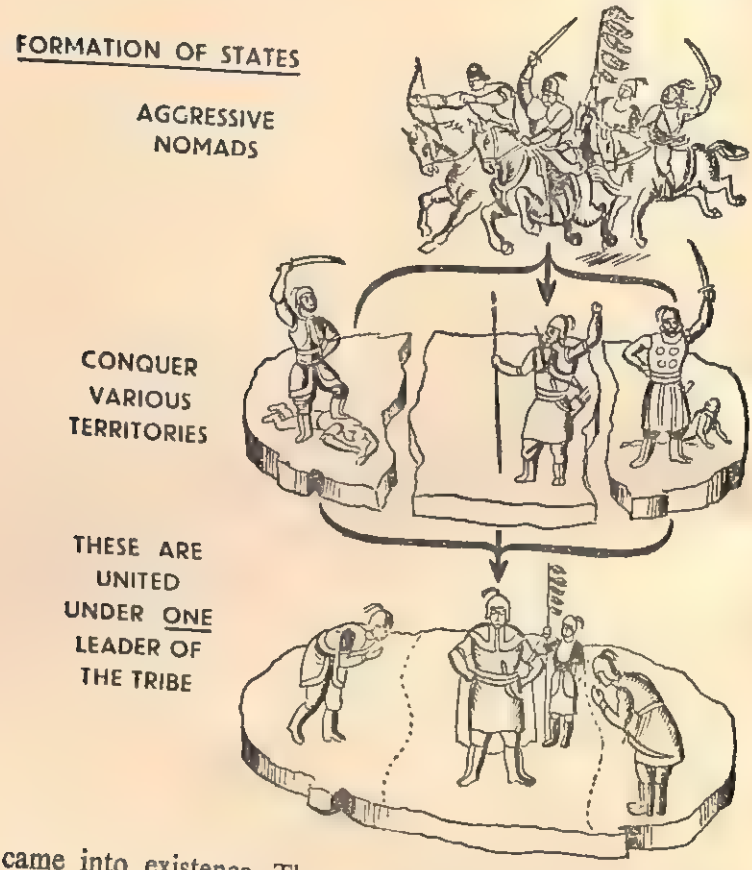
Another theory is known as that of the Social Contract. It assumes that the people of a country once upon a time got together and decided to surrender their independence to a government for their common advantage.

Now, none of these theories really explains how the State came into being. They only draw attention to one or other of the forces that helped to bring it into existence.

In point of fact, the State was not something that came—brand-new—either as a gift of God or out of a contract between people. It was nothing more nor less than a logical continuation of the processes which had already created the tribe, the village community and the city. Like them, it was the institution or unit which answered the needs of the times better than any other. What were those needs? Basically, they were peace, freedom of travel and trade, security and solidarity over as wide an area as possible. Two advances in communication—writing and road-making—made it possible for that area to be greater than before.

While village communities and cities were in themselves rather satisfactory social units, the rivalries between cities and the quarrels between villages over such things as land boundaries and the right to river waters often led to wars between them. Then again, there was the frequent clash between the settled cultivator and the nomad—that land pirate. Wandering tribes were attracted by the easy and secure living made by the farmers who had settled on rich soil irrigated by rivers. These wanderers attacked the village communities. Often, when they won the battle, they did not take the lands away but left the villagers in occupation on condition that they paid a tribute to their conquerors in return for 'protection' against *other* aggressors! This tribute was generally collected in the form of a certain share of the crops every year. The conquerors thus became the rulers and the villagers the ruled. Sometimes the same tribe conquered several villages and towns and levied tribute from them. They thus became the ruling class in a new State. Under the protection of the State,

the village and the town continued to exist side by side. It was thus out of wars of various kinds that larger units of government than the village community and the city



came into existence. These States were 'created by war, maintained by continual war and eventually destroyed by war'. A lot of bloodshed was necessary, you see, before the villages and free cities would surrender their freedom to this monster who threatened to swallow them. As one writer has put it: 'It was by the sword, the fire and the rack that the young States secured their first and decisive victory over the masses of the people.'

Why, if this was so, did people everywhere submit to this tyranny? Why did they allow one man calling himself king, or a small clique calling themselves aristocrats, to rule

them? The answer is that the common man was well content to live under lord or king, because it was safer and easier to do so than to assert himself and fight for freedom.

'All animals—and man is no exception—begin life as dependants,' says H. G. Wells. 'Most men never shake themselves loose from the desire for leading and protection.' So 'men paid in liberty for safety, shelter and regular meals'.

What shapes and forms did these newly-founded States take? They took one of two forms of government—monarchy or republic. That was true of ancient India as well as of other parts of the world. Both types existed—often side by side—as neighbours. A kingdom was called *rajya*. A republic was called *gana-rajya*. *Gana* means numbers, so *gana-rajya* meant a State where numbers or the masses of people ruled—that is, a democracy.

It is recorded that when some merchants from Northern India travelled to the South in the time of Buddha, they were asked by the king of the Deccan who was king in their country. 'Your Majesty,' was their reply, 'some countries are under *ganas* (that is, republics) and some are under kings.'

In fact, we are often taught that Buddha's father was a king. That is not so. He was really the elected president of a republic. The misunderstanding is due to the fact that he was called a raja which today means king. In those days, raja only meant ruler and was a term used to describe presidents of republics as well as kings.

Some of these ancient Indian republics were extremely democratic—every one had an equal voice in the government. Their apparatus was often of an astonishingly modern and up-to-date type. Thus, they had popular assemblies of all the people called the samiti and a parliament elected by the people called the sabha, which meant 'a body of men shining together'. In some cases, there were two houses of Parliament—the second house being a House of Elders.

These Assemblies had to have a quorum which it was the duty of the whip to secure. They voted, when necessary, by secret ballot by means of voting tickets of different

colours, which were duly counted by scrutineers. The debates were recorded in minute books.

The president of the republic (called the raja) was popularly elected, like the President of the United States of America today.

Some republics were so keen on preserving equality between their citizens that they actually refused to elect a raja or even ministers. The result was that, when they wished to negotiate treaties, as when Alexander the Great invaded India, they had to send delegations of 100 or 150 representatives to his camp for this purpose !

You see how foolish it is, therefore, when people say that oriental countries have no tradition of democracy, that they only know despotism and that democracy is a recent import from Europe!

The fact is that, even in States where there were kings, there was no autocracy. Control over the ministers, over taxation and over questions of war and peace were all in the hands of the sabha or parliament.

There was no question in India of the Divine Right of Kings, because the Brahmins saw to it that the spiritual monopoly remained in their hands ! The king was dependent on their blessings and support.

In fact, in Vedic times, the king was elected for life only and nobody thought his son had any business to succeed him. Election was by merit alone—statesmanship and

bravery being the tests. Good looks were also of importance. Thus, in one State in the Punjab, the handsomest man was chosen as king !

Instead of coronation prayers, they had in those days an election song sung by the samiti which elected the king. Some of the verses of this song were :

This State to thee is given for agriculture, for well-being, for prosperity, for growth.
Firm as the heaven, firm as the earth, firm as the universe, firm as the mountains, let this raja of the people be firm.
For firmness the assembly here appoints you.

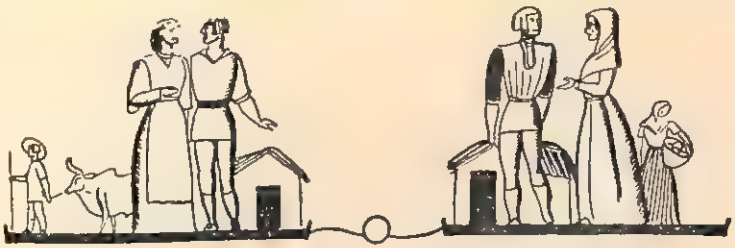
This shows that the king was looked upon as a sort of trustee of the people.

How many of us know that this tradition of a king being elected existed in India till quite recent times ? But so it was. When Shivaji was installed as king or *chhatrapati*, the ceremony took the form of an election.

If the king betrayed his trust, or if he tried to defy his people's wishes, he was sacked—the samiti being competent to depose the king.

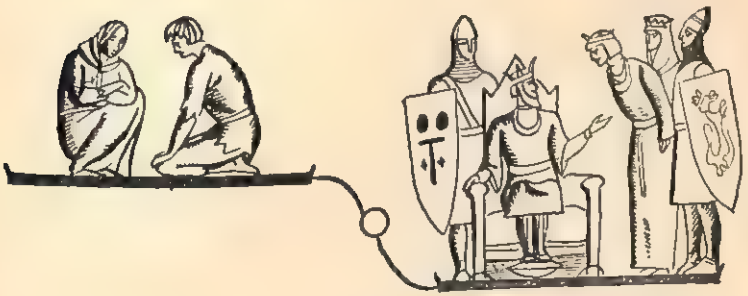
Unfortunately, these democratic States developed certain weaknesses. They were small, and there was a lot of rivalry and warfare between them. So what had happened to the village communities and the free cities now happened to them. Some States grew big and swallowed up the smaller ones. And as they grew bigger and bigger, they became less and less democratic. This *had* to be so, because of the lack of transport and communications in those days. There was then no railway, no telegraph, no radio, no printing press and no newspaper through which public opinion could be voiced. So distance proved to be a deadly enemy of democracy. By the end of the fifth century B.C., republics had disappeared from the political map of India. They were replaced by big, strong kingdoms ruled by autocratic kings who tried to gather all the power in their own hands in a strong central government. Similar centralized and stable

kingdoms were also to be found by that time in countries like Egypt, Iraq, Iran and China. That does not, however, mean that all at once kings became absolute monarchs whose



ALL PEOPLE WERE EQUAL IN SMALL STATES ...

...LARGER STATES CONQUERED THESE, AND ...



...GREAT INEQUALITY IN THESE LARGER STATES RESULTED

word was law. The limits to the king's authority varied from State to State and from century to century. Here and there, even in comparatively recent times, one can find

reminders of the fact that once upon a time kings were placed on the throne by the people and could be pushed off it by the people if they did not do their work properly. Here is the delightfully cheeky oath sworn by the subjects of the King of Aragon in Spain in the Middle Ages :

> We, who are as good as you, swear to you, who are no better than we, to accept you as our king and sovereign lord, provided that you observe all our liberties and laws but if not, then not.

One important result of the establishment of big, strong States was the growth of inequality among the people and the formation of social classes. We have seen how free and equal every one had been in the village community and the city-state but how private property had already raised its head. Now, in the big State, small classes of people with property or authority or arms separated themselves from the mass of the people. On the one hand were a small number of courtiers, officers, landowners and priests ; on the other hand were the large masses of peasants and artisans. Says Will Durant, a great American thinker and writer : ' Property was the mother, war was the father, of the state.'

The State, as it took shape throughout the then civilized world, is still with us. There are still kings and there are still republics, as there were three thousand years ago. But under the outer crust of this sturdy old institution new forces have been at work in the last five hundred years which have affected, and are continuing to affect, our growing human family. Let us now have a look beneath the crust of the State and see what has been, and is, going on there.

8
NEW GODS FOR OLD

IT HAS been said that the gods of people living in our times are not Ishwar and Allah and Jehovah, but Bharat Mata, Uncle Sam and John Bull. This startling suggestion turns out, if you examine it, to be quite sound. It is true, no doubt, that

the old-fashioned gods are still worshipped and have churches and temples, mosques and synagogues, built in their honour. But these gods are no longer the gods for whom—except perhaps in 'backward' countries—people are any longer prepared to die as they were throughout the world once upon a time. Today, men will lay down their lives only for the glory of the new gods.

Each of these new gods has a picture to represent him or her. John Bull is a fat, pugnacious gentleman with a distinct resemblance to a bull-dog. Uncle Sam is an old gentleman wearing a long coat and a top-hat with stars and stripes on it and forever smoking a cigar. Bharat Mata is a beautiful woman in a sari coloured orange, white and green, with her hair flowing gracefully down her back.

These gods even have feelings attributed to them, as if they were living human beings. We say that John Bull is angry or that Uncle Sam is hesitant, or that Mother India is groaning with the pain born of her sorrows. People even boast about their own little god by singing 'Britannia Rules the Waves', or '*Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles*' ('Germany, Germany, above all others'), or '*Sare jahan se achcha Hindustan hamara*'. These present-day gods are very new and young. Some of them are a couple of hundred years old—which is young as gods go! Others, like our Bharat Mata, are mere infants who have not even completed a century of existence.

In one way, however, these gods are revivals of the tribal gods which existed thousands of years ago. In tribal days each little tribe had its own little god. Our modern gods are very much like these tribal gods. The only difference is that now each of them belongs not to a small tribe of a few hundred people but to big nations of millions of people.

There we have stumbled on a new word—nation. What is this new group or unit of which the new gods are symbols or personifications?

We saw in the last chapter how the State came into existence somewhere about 3,000 years ago and how it still exists in our own day. For the greater part of its life, the State has been tied up with the fortunes of kings and their families—which your history books call dynasties. If the king of one State married the queen of another, the two States blended into one. If the daughter of one king married another king, a part of kingdom A was transferred as dowry to kingdom B along with all the people living in that part. That these people should be allowed to choose which State they should belong to never struck anyone, any more than today cattle expect to be consulted before they are sold or transferred from one farm to another. The city of Bombay is an example of this, because in the seventeenth century it was transferred from the Portuguese to the British State as part of the dowry the Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza brought to her English husband King Charles II.

The State, then, was purely dynastic. Any relationship between the people came from their common allegiance to the same king. It was a king of France, Louis XIV, who summed up the position very aptly when he exclaimed: '*L'état c'est moi!*' ('The state is myself!')

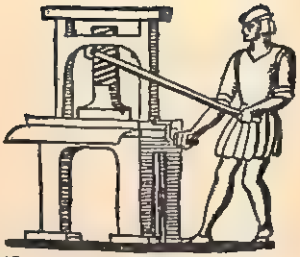
Now this question arises: How, in spite of this disregard for the natural groupings of people and their desires, did the idea of a nation take shape, until today nationalism is the dominant religion throughout the world? Since it was in Europe that nationalism first arose, we can get the answer to our question best by seeing what happened there from the seventeenth century onward.

The first factor to note was the weakening and eclipse of the orthodox religions. This created an emotional vacuum, so some other group or herd sentiment or loyalty had to replace them. The bond of religious faith was in time replaced by love of country.

Perhaps, more than anything else, the big economic changes which your textbooks describe as the Industrial Revolution were responsible for the birth of the nation. In place of Feudalism we have Capitalism. The invention of machines of all kinds resulted in handicrafts being displaced by mass-production in factories. The owners of factories wanted, above all, two things. The first was a wide market for their goods, free from hindrances like customs barriers and toll-gates. Their second need was for a large number of labourers, easily and cheaply available, to work in their factories.

The feudal system, which then prevailed in Europe, meant that every local lord had a right to levy a duty on all goods entering his barony and that all the peasants were serfs tied down to the land. These were obstacles to the needs of the manufacturer. So they had to go. But to be able to destroy the rights and power of the nobles, the factory-owners and merchants had to strengthen the authority of the nation-state The sentiment on which they played was the love of the common people for their country and soil which we call patriotism,

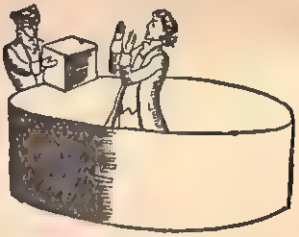
WEAKENING
OF RELIGION



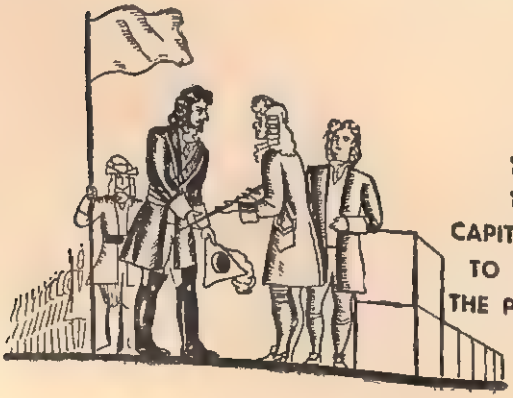
INVENTION AND EXPANSION
OF MACHINES

INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION ON NATION-WIDE SCALE

INCREASED PRODUCTION
CALLED FOR NEW MARKETS



BUT THE TARIFFS OF
SMALL STATES CONFINED
MARKETS



TO BREAK
TARIFF WALLS THE
CAPITALIST USED KINGS
TO LEAD ARMIES ON
THE PLEA OF PATRIOTISM

So princelings were replaced by Powers—like Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia—and people were asked to fight and give their lives, no longer for kings and princes and dukes, but for their country and their nation. The king now merely acted as the symbol of his country. Kings came and went, but the nation-state went on.

One helpful factor in the growth of nationality was attack from outside. Foreign invasion and foreign rule have always been the best stimulants of patriotism. When they face a common enemy, people feel more united. Once they feel a nation, the desire of every people is to have an independent existence of their own—to have their own national government. This is known as the Right of Self-determination.

That is how, when all the kings of Europe joined hands to suppress the French Revolution, the French people really became a nation and under Napoleon chased out the invaders. But they did not stop there. Napoleon's armies marched into one country of Europe after another. This in turn provoked national feeling among the peoples of the invaded countries. Thus, in the nineteenth century, Germany became a nation because of the fear of French aggression. Similarly, Italy achieved national unity because of the existence of Austrian rule.

The same thing happened later when various European Powers conquered so-called 'backward' peoples in America, Asia and Africa. As H. G. Wells put it : 'Oriental peoples, who had never heard of nationality before, took to it as they took to the cigarettes and bowler hats of the West.'

Thus the aggression of the various Powers in China made the Chinese feel one people and produced a strong nationalist movement under a great leader, Dr Sun Yat-sen. The organization he formed, called the *Kuomintang*—which means People's Party—was able in 1927 to set up one national government for the whole of China in place of several divisions each with a war-lord at its head. The same thing happened in our own country. Foreign rule provoked the same national sentiment and the Indian

National Congress claimed for the Indian nation the right to independence.

Those whose empires and interests are threatened by national feeling often deny that such and such a people are a nation at all. This raises the very interesting question—what, after all, *is* a nation? How are we to decide whether the people living in a particular part of the world are or are not a nation?

Many tests have been suggested. It is said, for instance, that a nation must have a common religion or a common race or a common language. Let us see how far these are sound tests.

Is common religion an essential characteristic of a nation? Most European nations include Catholics, Protestants and Jews. Egypt, which is predominantly Muslim, has a minority of Christians called Copts. Iran, also mostly Muslim, has a minority of Zoroastrians. China has more than two main religions: there are Confucian Chinese, Taoist Chinese, Buddhist Chinese, Christian Chinese and Muslim Chinese.

Common race fares no better as a test. You have only to look at a few nations to realize what an absurd idea that is. The British are supposed to be a nation. But they include minorities of Welshmen and Irishmen and Scotch Highlanders who are of an entirely different race from the English. The Japanese too are not of one race, because they have a minority of 'white' folk called Ainus entirely different from the 'yellow' Mongolian majority. In India, we have Caucasians (generally called Aryans) and Dravidians all nicely mixed up. The United States of America are of course the most mixed nation on earth—including the English, Germans, Scandinavians, French, Italians, Spaniards, Rumanians, Greeks, Red Indians and Negroes—and yet they are one nation. In any case, scientists like Professor Julian Huxley, who ought to know, assure us that the idea of a pure race is itself a myth. There is no such thing as a pure race. So race as the foundation of a nation is clearly a wash-out.

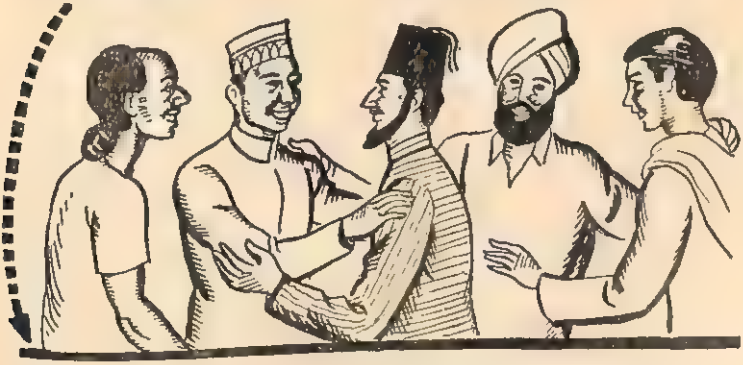
Common language is another myth. Canada speaks both

NATIONALISM IS NOT BASED ON

RELIGION

RACE

LANGUAGE



BUT IS 'A MATTER OF THE HEART AND SOUL'

English and French. Switzerland has three official languages — German, French and Italian.

So we see that all these tests fail. These characteristics of common religion, race, and language may help, but they certainly are not necessary to make a nation.

What then is this elusive *something* which binds people together in one nation? The answer seems to be that a nation is an accumulation of human beings who *think* they are a nation. Someone has said the same thing more cynically: 'A nation is a society misled by a common error as to its origin and a common aversion to its neighbours.' That is, we *are* a nation if we *want* to be a nation. It is an idea, a sentiment, a matter of feeling. You *feel* a nation, and so you *are* a nation.

Van Loon, whose delightful book *The Story of Mankind* I hope you have read, says: 'Nationality is not a matter of political frontiers or round skulls and broad noses, but *a matter of the heart and soul.*'

The fact that sentiment or emotion, and not history or science, is the foundation on which a nation is based is both the weakness and the strength of this unit, which today dominates humanity and can be a great factor for good or for evil. George Bernard Shaw put this in his own inimitable way when he said: 'Nationalism is an instinct which must be satisfied, wisely or unwisely, like birth, marriage or death.'

9
AN AGE OF EMPIRES

IN THE good old days of the great King Asoka, a sense of justice, it is said, prevented any Indian king from attempting conquest beyond the limits of India. It is true that it was the ambition of the most powerful kings to be *chakravarti* or ruler of the world. But the world they thought of was confined to India. Beyond its natural frontiers they had no ambitions. They had no desire to conquer foreign peoples. Indian influence and culture no doubt spread beyond the boundaries of the country to Burma, Malaya, Sumatra, Java, Bali, Borneo, Siam (Thailand), Cambodia and Indo-China. But it was not in the wake of conquering kings and armies dealing death and destruction that Indian thought and culture spread through Greater India. India is glad it can boast of no Alexander or Caesar, no Attila or Genghis Khan, no Clive or Napoleon. It was Buddhist monks and Brahmin priests and Indian merchants who carried with them India's spiritual teachings and its arts and crafts. And although now and then some adventurous Indian youth would marry a local king's daughter or dabble in local politics and found a dynasty, Indians did not take advantage of it to become an alien ruling race reducing the people to subjection.

So all the States of early Indian history—often miscalled 'empires', like the Maurya and the Gupta kingdoms—were purely Indian or national States. Imperialism never corrupted our people, however prosperous and powerful they were. Unfortunately, such restraint was not universal and, quite early in the history of the State, the empire made its appearance.

How is one to distinguish an empire from any other State? Some of you may answer that an empire is a big State. But

that would not be correct. It is not just a matter of size. There may be a very big nation like the Chinese or the Indians. Their State, though big, would not be an empire. On the other hand, if the people of a small country like England were to rule over Ireland, or those of another small country like Japan were to rule over Manchuria, these would rightly be described as empires. The essence of an empire is the rule of one people over another, so that there is a ruling people on the one hand and one or more subject peoples on the other.

Perhaps the earliest example of a real empire was the Iranian empire under such rulers as Cyrus and Darius, who

were called *Shah-in-Shah* or King of Kings. This was the largest organization achieved till that period of history. It stretched from the river Indus in the east to Greece in the west and included Egypt in North Africa. This empire was one of the best administered of its kind and Darius the Great has been described as one of the wisest of rulers. But that did not save this empire from wars and destruction.

'It is the fatality of empire,' explains Will Durant, 'to breed repeated war. For the conquered must be periodically reconquered and the conquerors must keep the arms and habits of camp and battlefield, and at any moment the kaleidoscope of change may throw up a new empire to challenge the old. In such a situation wars must be invented if they do

not arise of their own accord; each generation must be inured to the rigours of campaigns and taught by practice the sweet decorum of dying for one's country. . . An empire exists only so long as it retains its superior capacity to kill.'

After a century's existence the Iranian empire was overthrown and succeeded by that of Alexander the Great which, however, did not long survive his own death.

The next great attempt at establishing an empire was made in Rome. Rome started by being a republic with a large element of democracy in its government. When, however, the boundaries of the Roman State extended first to the whole of Italy and then spread as far as Britain in the north, Egypt in the south, the Atlantic in the west and Baghdad in the east, after a while 'the first great experiment in a self-governing community on a scale larger than that of a tribe or city collapsed'.

The choice was between chaos and a return to monarchy and tyranny. As so often in history, the loss of liberty was accepted as the price to be paid for order and security. At last, the republic turned into the empire and the people lost their liberty. Another change was that a small body of shrewd men grew enormously rich on the spoils of empire, while the bulk of the people remained poor.

The result was that when tribes of barbarians from northern and eastern Europe burst into the empire, the masses of people did not resist. As we saw earlier, when talking about the medieval city-states, people only fight to defend a country when they feel it belongs to them. To the mass of its inhabitants the Roman Empire did not seem to be worth defending. So, in the year A.D. 410, Rome fell.

That brings us to the empires existing in our own time—which is a veritable Age of Empires. Never in history has such a huge portion of humanity been absorbed in one empire or another. Professor Parker T. Moon, an authority on the subject, pointed out that before World War II ten imperialist nations possessed colonies and protectorates which, taken together, covered half the world's surface and embrac-

THE ROMAN REPUBLIC WAS RULED BY A DEMOCRATIC SENATE

THE REPUBLIC'S SOLDIERS EXTENDED ITS RULE OVER FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

THIS ENLARGED COMMUNITY COULD NOT CONTROL ALL ITS PARTS

SO AN EMPEROR WAS CROWNED TO SAVE THE COMMUNITY FROM CHAOS

UNDER THE EMPEROR THE PEOPLE LOST THEIR FORMER DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLICAN LIBERTY

AND SO REFUSED TO RESIST AGAINST BARBARIAN INVADERS, AND THE EMPIRE FELL

ed a third of the human race. Another third of humanity, while nominally independent, was indirectly under the domination of one or other imperialist Power. Things are a little better today. World War II hit a staggering blow at several of the old empires. On the other hand, a new imperialism threatens to replace the older ones. While some countries like India and Indonesia have become independent, others like Poland have lost the freedom they previously enjoyed.

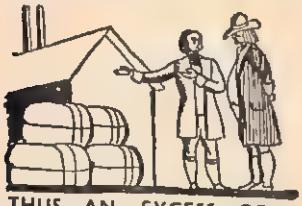
We saw, in the last chapter, how the Industrial Revolution in eighteenth-century Europe helped to replace dynastic kingdoms with nation-states. Here we shall pursue the story a little further because, if the nation-state was the reflection of the first stage of the Industrial Revolution, the empire is the result of the second stage. The empire, when you examine it, is nothing but the nation-state turned aggressor.

What happened was something like this. England led the world in the change-over from an agricultural to an industrial form of life. Cities sprang up round factories. People rushed from villages to cities. England produced lots of manufactured articles but no longer grew enough food to eat. Foodstuffs had to be imported from over the seas. To pay for them, England sold the surplus cloth and steel and other articles its factories turned out. To start with, England sold these things to France, Germany, Italy and other countries in Europe. But soon these countries had their own Industrial Revolutions. They too made the things they needed. So England had to look farther afield for markets — in Asia and Africa and South America — where the people were still ' backward ' and had no big industries of their own. But soon France and Germany and Italy also looked round for overseas markets. They were joined later by the United States of America and by Japan. It was found that more than one could play this game. The nation-states thus became aggressive and a regular race for markets developed between what came to be known as the Great Powers.

This conflict was made more intense by the struggle for

IN ENGLAND

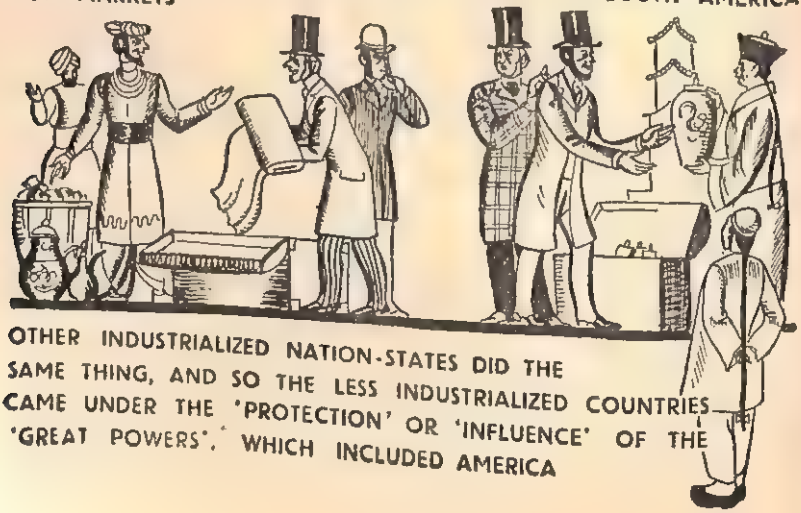
INDUSTRIALIZATION CAUSED A SWING-OVER FROM AGRICULTURE



THUS AN EXCESS OF MANUFACTURED GOODS RESULTED

WHICH WAS USED TO BUY FOOD FROM OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

SOON THESE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES BECAME INDUSTRIALIZED SO BRITAIN HAD TO LOOK TO ASIA, AFRICA AND SOUTH AMERICA FOR MARKETS



OTHER INDUSTRIALIZED NATION-STATES DID THE SAME THING, AND SO THE LESS INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES CAME UNDER THE 'PROTECTION' OR 'INFLUENCE' OF THE 'GREAT POWERS', WHICH INCLUDED AMERICA

raw materials which went on at the same time. Each country tried to get for its factories a monopoly of raw materials like petrol, cotton, jute, oil-seeds and metals. Yet another factor was the need for fresh fields for investing surplus capital by setting up factories in the 'backward' countries where cheap labour could be set to work on machines at low wages.

Now if the peoples of Asia and Africa had been as well equipped with arms and machines as those of Europe, this process might have been kept on a peaceful and orderly level and not done anybody much harm. But at that time these peoples had neither modern weapons of warfare nor machinery. So, when a quarrel was picked, they were not able to hold their own. 'A regular technique of intervention and expansion,' writes H. N. Brailsford, 'was worked out by the ingenuity of Foreign Offices. Occasionally women and children were in danger; sometimes a local potentate would box a consul's ears; on occasion a missionary was murdered for his faith.'

The result was that, one after another and under one excuse or another, Siberia, Mongolia, Manchuria, China, Indo-China, the Philippines, the East Indies, Malaya, Burma, Ceylon, India, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, and the whole of Africa were either conquered by one or other of the empires or came under their 'protection' or into their 'sphere of influence'.

The continent of Africa, in particular, underwent a terrific transformation. 'In 1850 it was a continent of black mystery; only Egypt and the coast were known. By 1900, all Africa was mapped, explored, estimated and divided between the European Powers,' writes H. G. Wells in his *Outline of History*. 'Little heed was given to the welfare of the natives in this scramble. The clash of inexperienced European administrators with the native population, led to horrible atrocities. No European power has perfectly clean hands in this matter.'

We saw in the last chapter how the aggressive nationalism

of the Great Powers has in turn produced the defensive nationalism of the subject peoples. The present position within the remaining empires is that they 'have reached the stage at which the schoolmaster can still keep order in his class, but can neither teach nor inspire it'.

The clash with the rising nationalism of the subject peoples is not the only clash these empires have produced. More bloody have been the wars between the rival empires themselves, including two world wars. Before World War II the historians of the day described the situation by saying that the 'Have-nots' (that is, States like Germany, Italy and Japan before the last war) attacked the 'Haves' (that is, States like the British Empire, the French Empire, Russia and the United States of America). The Germans, for instance, asked why, if forty million Englishmen could rule over a fifth of the human race, eighty million Germans should not have a still bigger empire? That question was based on the mischievous idea that the yellow and brown and black peoples were there to be ruled by one or other of the 'white' peoples. There was only one sound answer to the German claims, and that was that no nation has the right to rule another and that the world's riches, its raw materials and its minerals, wherever found, should be shared fairly and equally by all human beings. It was not the answer, however, which those who themselves possessed empires gave. So we have had war between those who possess empires and those who desire them, though neither side is entitled to them.

10
THE SHRINKING WORLD

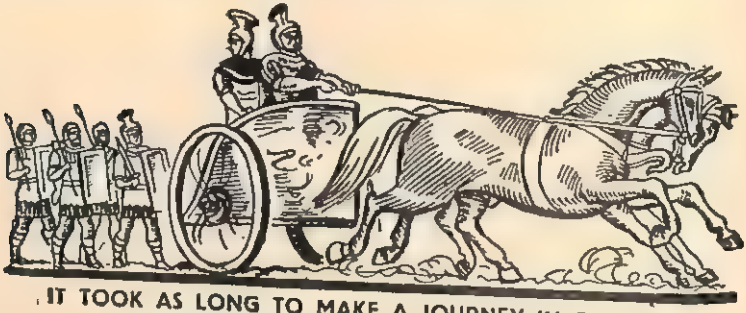
WILL YOU be very startled if I tell you that this world of ours is not the same size as it was a hundred years ago? Even a well-informed person, if you mention this, will be surprised and say that he has never heard of such a thing! And yet it is true that the world has shrunk—that it is not as big as it used to be.

You see, the size of the globe is, after all, only a relative thing to be measured in terms of distance—and distance has shrunk. A hundred miles or ten thousand miles in 1950 are not anything like as long as they used to be in 1850.

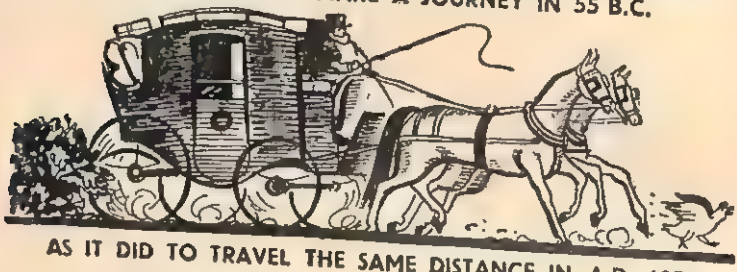
They have been telescoped. The mile has shrunk, because it no longer takes as long to travel a mile, either by land or sea, as it used to do; and by air you can travel it quicker still.

You will have got over your surprise by now. You will be smiling to yourself and thinking: I know *that*. Of course anyone can move quicker by train or car or steamship than by horse or sailing-boat, and quickest of all by aeroplane. What's so new about that?

That, I am afraid, is where you'd be wrong. It is *terribly, terribly new*. It's *so* new that the people who are supposed to be so wise that they become kings and ministers and dictators have not yet *begun* to understand it.



IT TOOK AS LONG TO MAKE A JOURNEY IN 55 B.C.



AS IT DID TO TRAVEL THE SAME DISTANCE IN A.D. 1850

IN 1950 WEEKS AND DAYS HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO HOURS AND MINUTES

You see, right from the time, some thousands of years ago, when man had tamed the horse and invented the rowing-boat and the sailing-boat, there had been a fixed maximum speed for travelling by land or sea. It took as long for a man to travel from Rome to London a hundred years ago as it did for Julius Caesar in 55 B.C. But today you can fly from Rome to London in six or seven hours.

Similarly, when the English first landed in India some 300 years ago, it took them several months to do the voyage from England. Today a man can fly from London to India in a day.

There is also another way in which the world has shrunk. Not only can you and I travel quicker, but our very thoughts, our voices and our messages, travel much faster than we can do ourselves. We have now a universal postal service, the telephone, wireless telegraphy and the radio linking the continents.

In the eighteenth century, when England and France went to war, the English and French settlers in India lived in blissful ignorance and peace for months and months, not knowing that their countries were at war ! In 1939, when England declared war on Germany, everyone in India knew within a very few hours.

Oliver Goldsmith, the English writer who lived in the eighteenth century, once remarked that if every time one fired a gun in England a man died in China, nobody would mind in the least. The shooting would go on merrily. But today what happens in China *does* matter to the whole world. And the shots that are fired there have an effect

on the lives of people far away. What a man does in London or Tokyo or New York can have an immediate effect on your life and mine.

In your geography lessons in school you learn how each part of the world has something it grows or makes and how we all depend on one another for exchanging these things so that all our wants are satisfied. But when your geography teacher goes and your history teacher comes, he brings with him a map which 'blushes' with many colours and shows frontiers between States traced in human blood. These States, your history teacher tells you, are 'independent' of one another. But can any country be really independent? When the petrol for a Great Power's army or navy or air force comes from a small neighbouring country, can either be really independent of the other? The answer is that they can't, and that is why certain countries have such a habit of being occupied by the armies of States which require their petrol. The same applies to countries which possess things like rubber and cotton and the rarer metals and minerals.

The important thing about the twentieth century is that mechanical inventions have led to mass production on such a gigantic scale that even the boundaries of the biggest empires have become too narrow and too small for economic progress. Thus France and Germany are separate States. But, except when they are at war, the German coal-mining industry and the French iron and steel industry are so mixed up that it is very difficult to say where one ends and the other begins. Canada is said to be a part of the British Commonwealth. But there is more American than British capital sunk in Canadian industries and, economically, Canada is much closer to the United States than to England.

The things we eat come from all over the world. An English writer once boasted how no great caliph, no old-time emperor in all his glory, could have drawn on such widely spread stores of produce as were to be found on his breakfast-table. There were oranges from Brazil, dates from

Africa, rice from India, tea from China and sugar from Demerara.

So too our sources of information and entertainment jump over national boundaries. We listen-in to news and talks and music broadcast from every country in the world. Talkies made in Hollywood in America are seen at the same time by people all round the globe.

The trouble is that the human mind has not yet caught up with the speed of its own inventions. We may move at a speed of 200 miles an hour but our minds think and crawl along at the good old trot of 20 miles an hour. Thus, thanks to the aeroplane, Berlin and Paris and London have become as much next-door neighbours as Bombay and Poona and Ahmedabad. But their inhabitants still insist, as in the old times, on their remaining capitals of so-called ' independent ' states, with Siegfried and Maginot Lines to separate them and with frontiers and customs-barriers at which passports are examined and duties levied, but at which the aeroplane has a hearty laugh ! This has made somebody compare these nations to people fleeing from a rainstorm who take refuge behind the walls of a ruin, forgetting that the roof itself has fallen in ! The progress of science, you see, has

abolished distance but not silly human prejudices and hatreds.

'Transport', wrote Rudyard Kipling, 'is civilization.' True—but only part of the truth. Transport is civilization *only* if man's mind catches up with the movements of the wheels of his car or the propeller of his aeroplane. Otherwise man is like a squirrel in a revolving cage, 'the wheel turns rapidly, but the squirrel remains within his cage'. As Jawaharlal Nehru puts it in his *Glimpses of World History*, it would be the height of absurdity to say that because an engine-driver can drive an engine and Plato or Socrates could not, the engine-driver is more advanced or civilized than Plato or Socrates. If today we are not really civilized,

if today people all round the globe are still ready to cut each other's throats in stupid and futile wars, it is because they have refused to give up the tribal gods and flags and songs which belong to a world moving at foot-and-horse pace.

This is not to say that *no* attempts have been made to keep pace with this shrinking world. For some time now humanity has been groping, as a man gropes in the dark, for some form or other of international association. The fruits of these efforts have taken the shape of the Inter-

national Postal Union, the International Labour Office, the International Institute of Agriculture, the Bank of International Settlements and—even during wartime !—the International Red Cross. The biggest and the most hopeful of these efforts to reach forward to world union was the League of Nations, which was brought into existence at the end of the World War of 1914-18. The credit for this step forward must go to President Woodrow Wilson of the United States of America who voiced the resolve of common people throughout the world *never again* to let their governments drag them into another war.

The treaty by which the League was brought into existence was called the Covenant, which means a solemn agreement. By this Covenant, the States which signed it bound themselves 'to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security, by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war . . . by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations'. The Covenant proceeded to declare that any war was 'a matter of concern to the whole League' and that any member resorting to war in defiance of its promise 'shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League'.

States were thus to have a sense of 'collective security'. Germany had already been disarmed by the Treaty of Versailles, at the end of World War I, and Britain and France and the other victorious States promised to follow the example of Germany. It looked as if war had at last been outlawed and that the words of the Bible, 'nation

shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more', had come true.

Unfortunately, these hopes were to be dashed cruelly and completely. The League, as someone aptly described it, behaved just like a group of merchants, each anxious to get as much trade for himself as he could and quite willing to stand by quietly and see one of his rivals robbed by another provided he himself was not the victim! All of them shouted loudly that robbery was disgraceful and must be stopped. But that was not much use, as none of them had taken the trouble to set up a common police force. They had chaukidars to protect their own shops only.

This was precisely what happened when Japan attacked Manchuria and then China, when Italy attacked Abyssinia, and when Germany attacked Czechoslovakia. The League failed again and again to come to the rescue and, though the League did expel Soviet Russia from membership in 1939 for attacking its tiny neighbour Finland without just cause, it did nothing to help the victim. It never once prevented a single Power from doing a single thing it wanted to do. The promise to disarm made by the victors at Versailles was not carried out. So when at last, in September 1939, the Second World War started, nobody even bothered to call a meeting of the League, which died 'unwept, unhonoured and unsung'.

Why, you will ask, did this noble effort fail so miserably? Different people have answered that question in different ways. But the one thing most of them are agreed on is that the League of Nations failed because the Great Powers—Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the United States, Russia and Japan—were not prepared to submit to the common will and the common interest of the peoples of the world. They were like the unruly lords and barons of old days who for a long time refused to submit to the authority of the law or to accept the verdicts of the law-courts until at last their power was smashed by the bigger unit of the State. H. G. Wells put his finger on this weak spot when he wrote:

'A league of Nations that is to be of any appreciable value to mankind must supersede imperialisms . . . but few of the people at the Paris Conference had the mental vigour even to assert this obvious consequence of the League proposal. They wanted to be at the same time bound and free; to ensure peace for ever, but to keep their weapons in their hands.'

This refusal to bow to the joint decision of the peoples of the world was in fact made quite clear at the start when the constitution of the League was drawn up. The members of the League were not to be nations but States. The Assembly of the League was to consist not of representatives elected by each nation but of nominees of various governments. So you see that the very title of the League was a misnomer. It was really a League of Governments. For instance, India was made a member of the League but it was represented at Geneva not by men elected by the Indian people but by those nominated by the British Government. The same applied to all subject peoples. For them there was no right of self-determination.

Even this League of Governments was not given the power to overrule the wishes of a single State. This was made clear by the rule that the decisions of the Assembly and of the Council were to be unanimous. A single government could stop any action being taken. It was as if the opposition of a single member of a parliament or a legislative assembly or a municipal council could prevent a law or a resolution from being passed ! There was thus no democracy, or rule of the majority, within the League.

Nor was there any machinery to provide for peaceful change. Now, change is the only unchanging thing in the world. It is a Law of Nature. The world cannot, as somebody once put it, marry any particular solution and live happily ever after. Within any particular country, political, economic and social changes are allowed to take place by means of laws made by parliament. But as all decisions in the League Assembly had to be unanimous, it was prevented from

becoming a parliament for the whole world. So when the balance of forces shifted and adjustments as between nations became necessary, the League machine just broke down.

When World War II ended, a new effort was made to replace the League of Nations with something more adequate to the world's needs. On 26 June 1945, representatives of 51 countries with a total population of 1,700 million met in San Francisco in the United States of America and signed the Charter of the United Nations. The preamble to the Charter, which is a noble document, runs as follows :

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS
determined

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

and for these ends

to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and

to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed

to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations.

There are several organs through which the United Nations functions, but the two most important are the General Assembly, which is somewhat like a parliament, and the Security Council, which is the executive or cabinet. In the General Assembly, each nation—big and small—has one vote. In the Security Council, however, while the members of the General Assembly elect six members, there are five members who are permanent and cannot be removed from membership. These are the so-called Great Powers—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States of America. What is even more peculiar is that no decision can be taken by the Security Council unless each and every one of these five Great Powers agrees to it. This means that even a single one of the Great Powers can stop the entire machinery of the United Nations from functioning if it chooses to do so. This is particularly dangerous because, while discussion of matters of common interest can take place in the Assembly, the power to take binding decisions and action rests with the Security Council alone. So we find that, in spite of efforts to improve on the League of Nations, the undemocratic power of veto has still been retained. This right to veto decisions and action has already been exercised by one of these Great Powers, Russia, on more than forty occasions. Attempts have been made by small countries to do away with abuse of the veto power but, since such a step would also require unanimity, no progress has been found possible.

There are other organs of the United Nations, however, which have already done splendid work of a constructive nature. Such, among others, are the Economic and Social Council, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Trade Organization, the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the Human Rights Division. All

this good work, however, does not guarantee the world against the return of war and gives no assurance of peaceful change.

The question, therefore, has arisen as to whether the United Nations should not be either reformed or supplemented by another organization, where the veto power is eliminated, where national sovereignty is limited, and where all countries, big and small, strong and weak, white and coloured, can sit together democratically with an equal voice in running the world's affairs. It is possible that the countries in which dictatorship flourishes, and which have not yet shown their readiness for a world order, would keep away from such an organization to start with; but that would be no reason for the rest of the world not getting together to lay the foundations of a World Government. Britain's socialist Government expressed its readiness, in January 1946, to participate in such a World Government. It is now for other democratic countries like our own to agree to take such a bold step also. What a great day it would be if the free nations of the world would come together in such an international organization where, let us say, a Brazilian would be the president, a Turk would be the head of the international police force, and a Dane have charge of its funds.

11
THE FEDERATION OF THE WORLD

WHAT would such a World Government mean and how would it work? There have been many plans placed from time to time before the world for an international order to suit this shrinking world of ours. We have been assured by those who produced these schemes that if only we adopted their particular plan everything would be fine and we should, like the prince and princess in the fairy tale, live happily ever after.

Our reading of the story of the human family so far tells us that the value of all such schemes depends on the extent to which they satisfy three conditions or tests. The first condition that any new order must satisfy is that it is a *world* order; the second, that it is a world *government*; the third, that it is a *democratic* world government.

To start with, the world needs an organization which will cover the entire surface of the globe and all the people who live on it. Nothing smaller will do for very long.

The fact is that not only countries but even continents and hemispheres have today lost their meaning as separate, self-contained units. So continental groupings alone won't do any more. They may only result in the more advanced countries in each continent ruling over the weaker and more 'backward' peoples. And such groupings are bound to clash at one stage or another. The New Order must be world-wide if it is to last.

The second necessity — that of a world *government* — means that the existing States and empires must be willing to surrender their authority to a world-state. There is no longer any room for completely 'independent' States, with private armies, navies and air forces. That, as we saw, was what

was wrong with the League of Nations. States will have to surrender part of their sovereignty.

Our history,' says H. G. Wells, 'has traced a steady growth of social and political units into which men have combined. In the brief period of ten thousand years these units have grown from the small family tribe . . . to the vast united realms—vast yet still too small and partial—of the present time . . . The telegraph and the telephone, the aeroplane, the continual progress of land and sea transit are now insisting upon a still larger political organization . . . the nascent Federal World State to which human necessities point. Our true God now is the God of all men. Nationalism as a God must follow the tribal gods to limbo. Our true nationality is mankind.'

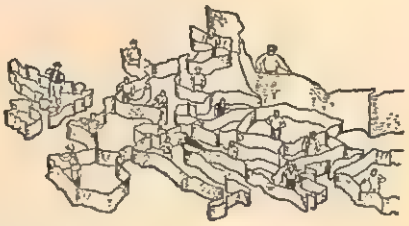
Just as in the past, in answer to the changing needs of Man, the village community and the city had to surrender their independence to the State, so tomorrow the nation-state and the empire will have to bow to a World Federation. This change, for which the world is ripe, can take place in more than one way. It can happen, for instance, through the conquest of the world by any one empire or combination of States. That, however, would hardly be a satisfactory or a permanent solution. History teaches us that, sooner or later, the conquered peoples would rise and revolt and there would be more wars. An attempt to unify the world by force would fail—as the efforts of the Iranians and the Greeks and the Romans failed in the past.

That brings us to our third condition for a new order—that it must be *democratic*. This means that the peoples of all countries, of all continents and of all colours, should have an equal voice in the ordering of the world's affairs. How is that to be secured? The answer is that the world-state should take the form of a federation of free peoples. When several free States join hands to form a bigger unit to which they surrender their independence, that bigger unit is called a Federation. Such federations, big and small, exist today in different parts of the world. Such are Switzer-

land, the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Australia, and in India we have just created our own federation.

'Here we are,' said Henry Ford, the maker of Ford

motor cars, giving his own country's example, ' forty-eight states, some of them larger than whole countries of Europe. But there are not forty-eight sets of international boundaries, nor forty-eight different currencies, nor forty-eight armies, nor forty-eight sets of customs-barriers.'



To make a World Federation or Union possible, the first step to take is that all rule by one people over another must be brought to an end. Then all of them can come together, as free and equal partners, in the World Union.

Does that mean that nations won't exist any more? Far from it. Though the nation-state will go, the nation will remain, just as the city remains though the city-state has disappeared. But nations will no longer speak through guns and battleships and bombers. They will express themselves in songs and ballads and dances.

In fact, if the present-day State has become too small a unit for purposes of political and economic administration, it has become too big a unit for the more intimate functions of social and cultural life. Once the political powers are transferred from the nation-state to the World Union, the nation-states—which are in many cases artificial units—are likely to wither away and to break up into smaller, more natural units of communal life, which may be called Regions.

These Regions would be areas inhabited by people speaking a common language and sharing a common culture. Each of them would have its own parliament for ordering its local administration and its own university for the development of education, of language and of the fine arts. The Region would be made up of several garden cities of which we had a glimpse at the end of Chapter 6.

The trouble with the big States of today is that, even in those described as democratic, a voter may cast his vote at election after election without really understanding the big, far-away problems which are placed before him once every four or five years and without his vote having any great effect on his own daily life. In the smaller Regions of the future, the problems will be closer to the voter, more local in their nature, and therefore easier for him to understand. In such a unit, it will be possible, as Lenin long ago said it should be, for every cook to learn to run the State.

IN THE NATION-STATE THE VOTER OFTEN VOTES ON QUESTIONS FAR REMOVED FROM HIM

IN THE 'REGION' THE VOTER WILL VOTE ON QUESTIONS CLOSER TO HIM, WHICH HE UNDERSTANDS

These regional communities will be able to live their lives undisturbed, in freedom and in peace. Thanks to the well-balanced economy of their garden cities, with their combination of industry and agriculture, they will be able to supply most of their material wants. But they cannot

be entirely self-sufficient, nor will they exist in isolation. The World Federation or Union will be the medium through which the Region will contribute to, and share in, the material prosperity and the cultural development of mankind.

When will this happen? How long will human beings take to become intelligent enough to achieve this? Will it take a few years or several centuries for Man to convert into reality the vision which the English poet Tennyson had when he wrote those lines which I am sure some amongst you know:

> For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see;
> Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be; . . .
> Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
> In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

12
NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

IN THE preceding chapter, we had a peep into the future and saw how, if men are intelligent, they will merge all their States and their empires into a World Union or Federation. With that we seem to have come to the end of the exciting story of our growing human family. What then remains?

The answer is that the setting up of a World Federation is not the end or goal of human advance. It is in fact only a beginning—a means to a higher end. That goal we may describe as a freer, a fuller and a richer life for each human being, permitting the expression and the growth of his or her personality.

If today we know more than we did a few thousand years ago, if we are not so afraid as we were once of the forces of Nature (though we still are almost as afraid of one another), if we have learnt to relieve physical pain, if we have to work a little less hard, if perhaps we are a wee bit more reasonable, it is the result of centuries and centuries of mutual aid, of co-operation between larger and larger groups of men. It is because human beings have followed, not all the time nor very faithfully, the advice given in a verse to be found in one of the old Sanskrit books:

For the family sacrifice the individual, for the community the family, for the country the community and for the soul the whole world.

The World Federation of tomorrow or the day after will be the culmination of this process, but it will not automatically guarantee further progress. 'If the whole world were organized into a single State,' says one writer, 'yet mankind might be worse off under its sway, in the real essentials of human life, than if they were painted savages . . . We have always first to ask: What kind of government? . . .

What kind of common life will it provide or allow to its citizens?'

There are other people who say: What does it matter what kind of government there is, so long as it is efficient? One such was the English poet, Alexander Pope, who wrote:

> For forms of government let fools contest;
> Whate'er is best administered is best.

Which may be a foolish thing to say, because who is to decide what is good government? One man may say that the present government of any given country is good, another may say it is rotten. It is a matter of opinion or point of view.

Are there, then, no tests by which you and I may judge whether any particular kind of government is good or bad? Are there no requirements we may ask a future world government to satisfy?

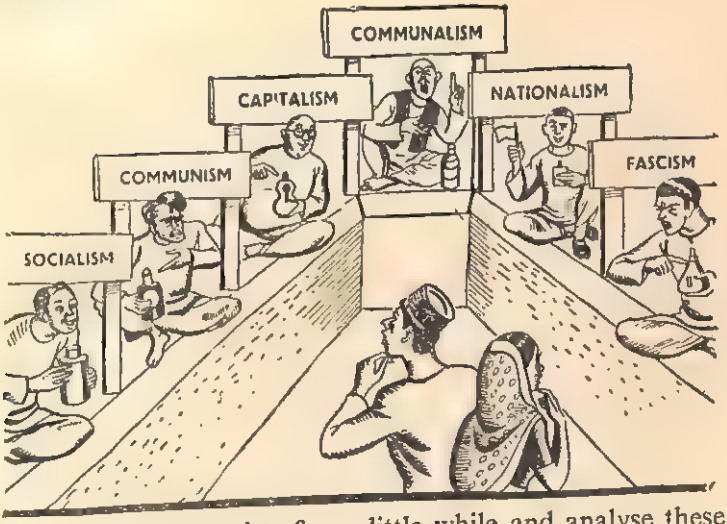
There are, I think, two such tests. The first is that a government should serve 'the greatest good of the greatest number'; that is, it should be so organized as to give the people the nicest homes, the best food, the greatest comfort, the finest education and the greatest amount of leisure possible for recreation and for the creation and enjoyment of beautiful things.

The second test of good government is that it should at the same time give the largest amount of freedom to every man and woman and should treat their personalities with respect and sympathy, and act only with their consent. Since only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches, it means that the people should decide what kind of political shoe they choose to wear. That is democracy—which that great President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, described as 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people'.

'Liberty', said Lord Acton, the historian, 'is not a means to a higher political end. It is itself the highest political end.' Which means that without self-government there can be no lasting possibility of good government.

The big problem of government in our century is to reconcile the interests of Society as a whole with the liberty of the Individual, to make sure that one does not destroy the other. That government is the best which strikes a perfect balance between the two.

Throughout the world today people are faced with a choice between various kinds of governments. There are rival political doctors, each with his own brand of patent medicine, who guarantee to cure us of our ills if only we put ourselves under their treatment. And poor Mr Man-in-the-Street, whether he is in Bombay or Dublin or Stockholm or Rio de Janeiro, feels dreadfully puzzled and wonders which to choose.



Shall we be chemists for a little while and analyse these patent medicines? Let us see how they stand our two tests because, as citizens of the world, we have each of us to make our choice. By the time we have finished our analysis, we

shall find that we can sort out these various brands of governments into two main groups.

In the first kind, the individual citizen can think and say more or less what he likes. The government is responsible to the people and can be replaced by another if the majority of the people so desire. In countries which belong to this group, which we may call democracies, the result generally is widespread education and enlightenment, a rising standard of living, and greater equality between different classes of people. That is not, however, the case in all such countries. In some of these, money power is strong and the gulf between a handful of rich people and the masses of the poor is wide. There is very little planning, and often a lot of waste. The results of following a democratic way of life are rather uneven, and vary widely from country to country. That is only natural since the success of the democratic way of life is dependent on the wisdom or stupidity of the common people who govern themselves. Each nation, it has been said, gets the kind of government it deserves.

When we turn to the other group of States, which we may call dictatorships, we find the government having total control over the life of the people. Industries are owned and run by the State, and everything is planned in advance by the officials. Right at the top of the State there is One Man. He orders everything. He dictates. The dictator's every wish must be obeyed. Any opposition to him is destroyed by force—by death. Like the kings of olden times, he can do no wrong. His officials obey him as soldiers obey a general. A common man may not speak or write or even think for himself. Now, if it were possible for such a system to yield results in increasing the prosperity and happiness of the people, there might *perhaps* be something to be said for it, though personally I would not like to live in such a State, nor, I guess, would you. As it happens, however, although the dictators claim omniscience and demand that all decisions should be left to them for the general

good, none of the basic problems of our time has been solved in such States. Conditions of work and living show no improvement; equality is even more distant than before Liberty, which has been bartered away in the vain hope of equality and security, is lost and nothing has been gained in return but more inequality and more fear.

IN **DEMOCRACIES** THE PEOPLE CONTROL THEIR GOVERNMENT

IN **DICTATORSHIPS** THE GOVERNMENT CONTROL THE PEOPLE

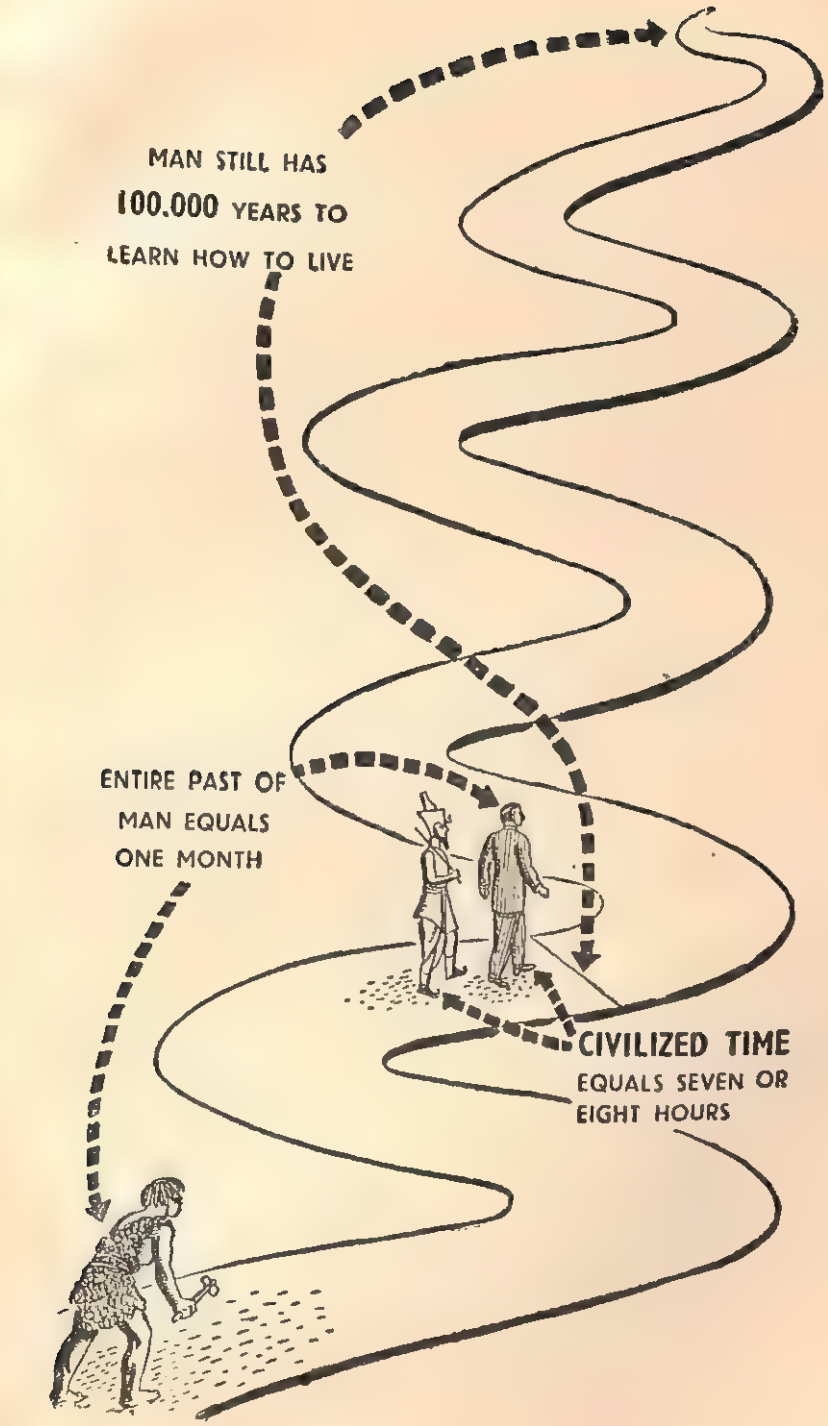
So there we are. We must turn back to the first brand, inadequate and disappointing as it may sometimes be. History teaches us that there are no short cuts to the good life, which has to be earned and deserved by the people before it is achieved. We do want planning for a good life,

but not at the cost of liberty. We must move forward to a better society as fast as we can, but that cannot be faster than people are ready to move—freely and of their own will.

How, you will ask, can such big steps forward be taken? Can they be achieved by violent wars and revolutions? There are many people who think so, and they are prepared to beat and kill others who won't swallow their special brand of the new order. There are also some wiser people —they are very few—who won't believe that by killing people you can make them wiser or more friendly! They don't think noble ends can be achieved by foul methods. Such were Buddha and Asoka and Jesus Christ. Such in our time and in our own country has been Mahatma Gandhi, whose weapons were non-violence and truth.

We often hear people say that most human beings have not yet evolved or grown up enough to stick to truth or non-violence. That is very true. Somebody has described the people of our time as possessing the powers of gods and the minds of school-children. Which only shows how grown-ups *will* put on airs! A Russian peasant put the same idea much better when he told the writer Maxim Gorki: 'You can fly in the air like birds and swim in the sea like fish, but you don't know how to walk upon the earth like men.'

Now, there is no need to get despondent at the fact that human beings lack the intelligence as yet to know their real interests. We must not forget that the human race is still very, very young. C. E. M. Joad, in his delightful little *Story of Civilization*, has computed that if we reckon the whole past of living creatures on the earth as one hundred years, the entire past of Man works out at one month, and during that month there has been civilization for only seven or eight hours. He also points out that while there has been little time for us to learn things so far, there will be oceans of time in which to learn better. Because, while Man's civilized past has lasted seven or eight hours, his future (till the sun grows too cold or too hot to maintain life on the


MAN STILL HAS
100.000 YEARS TO
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ONE MONTH
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EQUALS SEVEN OR
EIGHT HOURS

earth) is estimated on the same scale at a hundred thousand years !

So people have to be educated 'to walk upon the earth like men' and to take the next step forward. We find here and there some peoples who were very warlike once upon a time but have now grown up enough to be mild and peace-loving. Such, for instance, are the Swedes and the Swiss. It is necessary that people all over the world should become educated like that. If they don't learn their lessons in time, they will go on having one terrible war after another until—like the dinosaur and the brontosaurus who *would* go on fighting amongst themselves—the human species becomes extinct.

How is this to be avoided? By people being taught to think freely and to think new thoughts. Some clever person once pointed out that if everybody had always thought the same as his parents we should all of us still be savages !

Where do you and I come into this picture? We come in because, as a seventeenth-century English poet, John Donne, put it (in the spelling of the time which I am leaving untouched) :

> No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

We are all members of one human family and must stand or fall together. There is no life possible for us except through the medium of society—that medium which 'supplies nourishment to the growing baby, equips it with the signs of language and the symbols of association, prepares it by cultural habitation to eat this food and reject that poison, to believe this truth and turn aside from that error'.

You and I, we each have a part to play in this forward march, this long pilgrimage of Man. Each of us can decide

whether he or she will lead in the vanguard or be one of the many stragglers in the rear.

The process that has made people like you and me out of the ape-man in some fifty thousand years has by no means come to an end. It has to continue until men and women become something like the gods and goddesses they have so far imagined and worshipped. That is not just a day-dream. Because, just as men have not always been men but have gradually evolved out of a different kind of creature, so men need not always be men but could gradually evolve into yet different beings.

The spirit of Man has faced all kinds of dangers and his growing intelligence has slowly and painfully surmounted all the obstacles that have come in his way. Each one of us is a custodian of a little particle of that spirit and that intelligence. We have to guard and preserve it against all attempts to take it away from us. We have to speak the truth as we see it, even if all around us there is falsehood and darkness. That way we can each of us play our little part in helping people all over the globe to reach that happy world which Rabindranath Tagore prayed that our own country might achieve :

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ;
Where knowledge is free ;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls ;

Where words come out from the depth of truth ;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection ;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit ;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

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